

**“Cricket is in the blood”
(Re)producing Indianness:
Families negotiating diasporic identity
through cricket in Singapore**

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For all diasporic people.

ABSTRACT

Diaspora invokes a way of living. Geographic displacement, either voluntary or forced, brings about heightened processes of negotiation between the past, the present and the future. Effectively, diaspora creates a space for dialogue about notions of individual subjectivity and group representation, as well as global and local belonging. These processes contribute pivotally to the identity development of diasporic people, and this plays out continually as is evident in the choices diasporic people make about the way they live.

This thesis explores one aspect of the lives of elite diasporic Indian families in Singapore – cricket. The central question is how these diasporic people become ‘Indian’ through their participation in the sport. There are two major components – cricket and family.

Firstly, I identify cricket as a site of diasporic negotiation in the lives of these Indians. I explore their practice of this activity as a physical and ideological space in and through which they negotiate their identity. In a country where cricket is not common practice, the Indian domination of the widespread ‘public culture’ of their country of origin reflects their intensified investment in Indianness. This results in the creation of a minoritized and largely exclusive social space. By participating in cricket, they play out their diasporic Indian identity. This is a myriad process of social construction and transformation of Indianness at individual and collective levels. Through active and concerted social labour in the cricket arena, translation of relevant Indianness into a foreign setting effectively creates a new Indian ethnicity. It is the very negotiation and mobilization of their ethnicity that facilitates the thriving of this elite Indian diaspora.

The other major component in this thesis is that of the family in diaspora. This is important because most of the elite Indians moved to Singapore as nuclear family units. Decisions made and the structures of their lives take into account the impact upon the household at individual and collective levels. I explore and highlight the importance not only of families doing diaspora together, but that of the varied individual contributions of family members to cricket and how their various parts

support one another's negotiation of their Indianness. Divided broadly into three categories of fathers, mothers and children (male and female), I look at their different ideals, attitudes and involvement in the sport. From my research, I found that fathers were the ideological spearhead and instigators of interest for cricket within families; mothers played support roles; and children participated for a variety of reasons. Boys played because it was deemed the natural thing for Indian boys as it is 'in their blood'. Girls on the other hand, played for a variety of different reasons which differed from their male counterparts. Their participation was a concerted effort in an attempt to get forms of Indianness that are reflected and constructed in cricket, 'into their blood'.

This thesis is framed by the concept of doing Indian diaspora in Singapore. I explore the cricket arena as a key site of identity negotiation in three realms – the individual, the family, and the wider Indian network/community. This analysis seeks to highlight the importance of each realm in reinforcing and supporting one another's projects of constant and complex formation processes of Indianness.

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My thesis journey has been a tremendous one that allowed me entry into new arenas which I never thought possible and has resulted in valuable changes in the way I view and do things. Despite its ups and downs, I found the entire venture thoroughly rewarding. The best part is undoubtedly the people with whom I have had the fortune to cross paths with. And to each individual, I say – thank you!

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To God be the glory.

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Introduction

“Cricket is the religion of India. It unites everyone from Kashmir to Kolkata.”

Maha Devan, IT manager¹

My interest in the Indian phenomenon

‘Cricket is in the blood of Indians’: cricket is described as the ‘layman’s religion’ as exemplified in the comment by Maha Devan above. Expressions such as these are common amongst Indians I have encountered. Due to varying factors (i.e. historical, economic, social, technological, political), cricket arguably operates as a major centripetal force for Indian nationals and the Indian diaspora. It acts as a potentially uniting force across nations and a country that is characterized by a diversity of ethnic groups, hundreds of languages, multiple religions, a caste system, and other social, political and economic differences. This thesis will explore this assumption by focusing on a particular diaspora group – Non-resident Indians (NRI) in Singapore.

When I was in India (summer 2005), I noticed a trailer on television that stated, ‘If cricket were a religion, then you would have over a hundred days to worship.’ This statement demonstrates that Indians themselves are fully aware of their “fever” or passion for cricket and acknowledge this fact proudly (Puri 1982, cited in Appadurai 1995: 24 in Brekenridge). Ramachandra Guha, a prominent Indian writer on cricket, suggests that for Indians, “while there is more to life than cricket, cricket is itself a metaphor for life” (Guha and Vaidyanathan 1994: xii).

Being neither Indian nor an avid cricketer, I am often given odd looks as to why I, a Singaporean Chinese female, would be interested in research on Indians and cricket. It

¹ Quote taken from article entitled “Bonding over family, friends & cricket” featured in a Singapore newspaper, *The Straits Times*, 14 February 2005: 20, Review section.

is important that I explain the genesis of my interest because these factors shaped and influenced my study.

My interest in the fervour with which Indians approach cricket was triggered three Christmases ago. On a statutory holiday, the Indian restaurant² at which I was working part-time, had organized a social cricket game. The chefs, managers, and three part-time wait staff congregated at a prearranged public park. In addition to the restaurant staff, the families of the managers were in tow. That was my first exposure to cricket.³

While the men divided themselves into two teams, I was made to sit on the boundary demarcation and after being given a two minute overview of the game, I was asked to score. I did as best as I could. I was the only female involved actively in the game. The wives sat under the shade of trees, chatting and watching the game intermittently whilst they kept an eye on their young children. Everyone was in high spirits as the men played the whole afternoon till dusk, non-stop. By the end of the day, the players were exhausted but all the participants walked away wearing broad and contented smiles.

After my first exposure to Indians and cricket, I started noticing matters relating to cricket in the restaurant. For example, I began to understand the significance of the cricket related paraphernalia that hung on the walls of the restaurant. The most prized possession was a bat that was personally autographed by India's cricket hero, Sachin Tendulkar. Upon enquiry, I was told that when the Indian Cricket team came to Christchurch to play against the Black Caps the previous year, everyone at the restaurant had gone to watch them play at Jade Stadium. When the Pakistan National team came however, only the managers watched the game. But when the Pakistani players came to the restaurant in the evenings to dine, they caused quite a stir. The chefs in the kitchen were absolutely distracted as they made every effort to get glimpses of the cricket stars. And the night that Shoaib Akhtar, the world's fastest bowler, came to dine, he caused so much excitement to the extent that the duty

² That was the Indian restaurant in which I conducted my fieldwork for my Honours research paper: *Meaning Making & Identity Construction of Indian Chefs*, 2004.

³ Despite having lived in New Zealand for five years, I had little knowledge or interest in the seemingly complicated sport.

manager drove home to get his camera to take advantage of the once-in-a-lifetime photo opportunity.

The Indians I knew were in love with cricket. Further displays of how important cricket is to them were exemplified by the manager placing a television set in the kitchen during matches involving the Indian team. When the television was not available, the manager's wife would call to report the score either at regular intervals or when wickets were taken. The manager would then relay the information on to the chefs who would freeze all that they were doing to listen and then erupt into a high energy discussion.

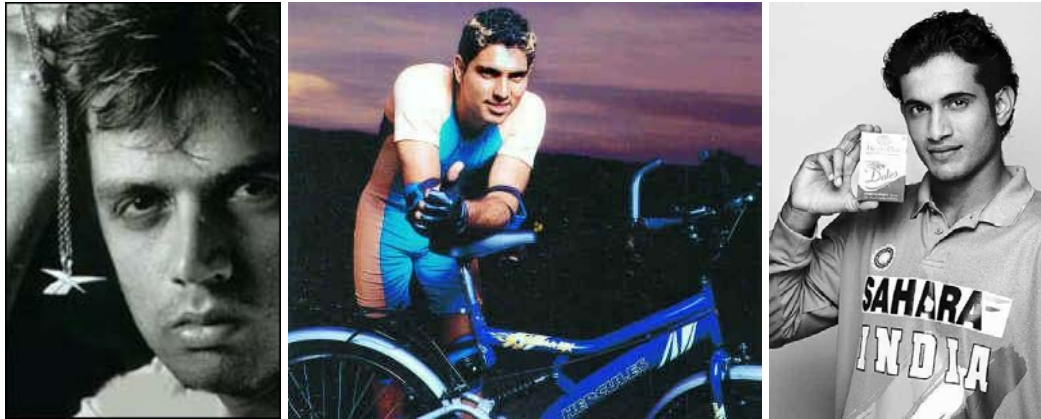


[Figure 1.1] Roadside hawkker making and selling cricket bats
(source: www.haefale.de)

After working with, and getting to know many Indians over a period of one and a half years, my interest in their country, culture and society peaked. Thus, the summer of 2004 found me in India for two months. It was there that my appreciation of India's 'national sport'⁴ reached new heights. I noticed that it is a game that is not only played and watched, but also a regular and popular topic of conversation at home, at work, in the community, on the street, wherever people get together, and at any time of day. Men, women, children, and grandparents - everyone had cricket on their lips. The young and old alike were glued to the television screen when matches were broadcast. Although I am not fluent in Hindi, I could pick up words about cricket

⁴ Cricket is the de facto national sport of India due to its overwhelming popularity. It is not officially sanctioned nor supported by the Indian government. The 'national team' is privately sponsored and governed by the Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI). Hockey is India's official national sport (en.wikipedia.org).

from many conversations that I overheard. Billboards of cricketers fronting advertising campaigns for products like Pepsi lined the streets and hawkers tried to sell me cricket bats for 150 rupees (NZ\$6).

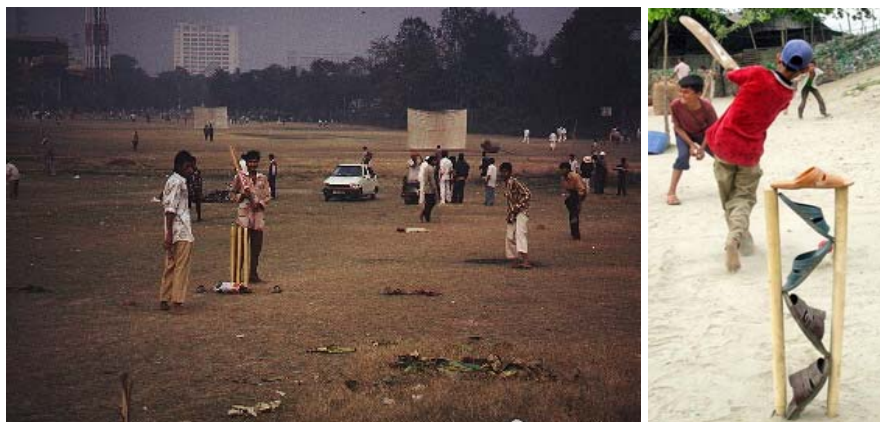


[Figure 1.2] Indian cricketers fronting advertising campaigns. (Left to right)

Rahul Dravid (Captain) for Reebok (source: www.img.123india.com)

Yuvraj Singh (middle-order batsman) for Hercules cycles (source: www.retailyatra.com)

Irfan Pathan (all-rounder) for Cavinkare Pvt Ltd (source: www.thehindubusinessline.com)



[Figure 1.3] Indians playing cricket (source: www.iaf.nl and www.img241.imageshack.us)

And from Chotu, a young servant boy of a household I stayed in, I learnt that playing cricket was his passion and escape from the drudgery of his life.

There was no escape from cricket for me during my stay in India. Inevitably, I was roped into playing the game one evening. I and two male friends played in a small front yard. Rules were improvised to fit the playing area. We used a stick as the wicket and played with a couple of luminous plastic balls. We each took turns to bat

and to field. As the game progressed, I received coaching and advice from my self-professed cricket loving companions. And whilst we played, children from the neighbourhood climbed onto the roof of the house next door to watch, to cheer and to retrieve balls that went astray. To my surprise, I enjoyed myself and my own passion for the sport was ignited. No longer was I a mere spectator. I had become an active participant with a growing fascination for the phenomenon of Indians' obsession for cricket.

Narrowing my focus

Having decided to look at Indians and cricket, I had to narrow my research field. I chose to focus on the occurrence and meaning of cricket amongst diasporic Indians, because I noted that for the chefs in New Zealand, the game was more than a simple pastime. I had originally thought of conducting my research in Christchurch but found that Indian families are few and scattered, and the ones that I knew were not keen on participating in my research. I then explored the option of researching the phenomena in my country of origin – Singapore. My decision to do so was sealed upon reading an article in the Singapore newspaper, *The Straits Times* entitled 'Bonding over family, friends & cricket', in which the centrality of cricket in the lives of the 34,000 Non-Resident Indians (NRI) was described.

The shift in focus to Indian migrants in Singapore was not only a geographic change; it also resulted in a huge change in the type of people I was to deal with. For one, these Indians are of a higher social class. Most enter the country as middle class professionals. To define this group of people, I use Lareau's definition; people "employed in a position that either entail[s] substantial managerial authority or that centrally draws upon highly complex, educational, certified (i.e., college-level) skills" (2003: 27). Positions the male household figures take up include "financiers, venture capitalists, engineers, scientists, lecturers, IT professionals, and heads of multinational companies" (*The Straits Times*, 14 February, 2005, 20 – Review). And because these

foreign talents are highly sought after by the Singapore Government, many are easily granted Singaporean Permanent Residence (PR)⁵.

A second difference is that NRIs are all fluent in English. This worked to my benefit because it helped facilitate communication⁶. The third important difference is that the NRIs migrate as family units. The familial factor proved to be pivotal to my research. A fourth difference is that of the status of the cricket in Singapore. Because of its history (which I will expand on in chapter two), cricket is viewed as an elite hobby played largely by the expatriate community. And because NRIs ‘naturally’ possess cricket capital which facilitates their playing of the game, they have in large part come to dominate the cricketing arena, making it an exclusive minoritized space. The combination of these key factors shaped my fieldwork and research, giving me a unique view of the diasporic Indian phenomena.

Ethnographic aims

Whilst reviewing the literature available on Indians and cricket, I read a lot of books and articles on Indian cricket celebrities (e.g. Guha & Vaidyanathan 1994, Bose 2006, Majumdar 2006). What stood out for me was the lack of mention of the cricketers’ families. In the books where families are mentioned, they are largely peripheral to the player’s lives. For example, in *An Indian Cricket Omnibus*, the chapter by Peter Roebuck on Sunil Gavaskar, one of India’s first international superstar batting geniuses from Bombay, briefly mentioned his family as follows.

And Sunil brought his family with him. Not many international cricketers take their parents, wife and son with them on their travels. Some travel specifically to escape from their entourage!... But the Gavaskars are enjoying Taunton immensely. Little Rohan (4) whose hero is Viv Richards, fairly revels in playing with the children of ‘Swoop’s’ colleagues. He joins in fielding practices with gusto, bats left-handed (preferably with a Jumbo – Viv uses one and pops into the dressing room when he’s

⁵ “Singapore has thrown its doors open to foreign talents to help maintain its competitiveness and to boost its population growth... The hope is that foreign talent won’t just come to Singapore to work, but will also sink their roots there and have children who will one day become Singapore citizens” (*Statistics show birth rates steady among migrants*, 19 September 2006: www.channelnewsasia.com)

⁶ My lack of fluency in Hindi proved to be a significant barrier to communication with the Indian chefs during my Honours research.

lonely – braving even the dark threats of fierce Uncle Ian to seek ‘papa’s solace – Sunil receives eighty-five letters a day at home (Rohan gets five!) (Roebuck in Guha & Vaidyanathan: 1994: 76)

Roebuck mentions Gavaskar’s family briefly, citing him as an exception for bringing his family along with him when he travels. Richard Cashman, who described spectators at cricket matches in India in the 1930s, wrote one line about the women present.

Further along this side there were also noticeable many Parsi ladies clad in colourful saris in tents ‘set apart for the native gentry’ (Cashman 1980: 152).

It is perhaps understandable and even excusable that Cashman wrote so little about women’s involvement in cricket in the 1930s but there has been a change since then. Indian women are represented by a national female cricket squad and some women know just as much about cricket in terms of the playing and match statistics as their male counterparts. However, the picture painted by Cashman reminded me of how the wives of the restaurant managers did not participate in the game, but sat in the shade in their Indian suits, and watched. The involvement of Indian females in cricket varies. I once spoke to one of these managers’ wives, asking her about her interest, or lack thereof, in cricket. Her reply was that she loved the sport and played it as a child, but since shouldering responsibilities of work and the care of a young child, cricket had taken a back seat. However, when the opportunity arises to either watch or discuss cricket, she seizes it.

A considerable amount of academic literature on cricket exists. Foci, which often overlap, include the history of cricket (Guha 1998, Majumdar 2003), cricket as a cultural practice (Kaufman and Patterson 2005, James 1963; 1980, Ninian 2004, Anand 2002), cricket and nationalism (Vahed 2003), cricket and Indianness (Appadurai 1996), and cricket and diasporic identity (Werbner 1996, Williams 2001, Madan 2000). The family is by and large ignored in cricket literature. This, however, is not restricted to cricket. Anthropologist Catherine Palmer described sport as “a cultural phenomenon that evokes passion, drives economies, shapes politics, highlights inequalities and underscores national, regional and ethnic identities” (2002:

253): this statement illuminates the primary focus of existing cricket-related and sport literature in general. However, in recent years, there has been a move within the fields of anthropology and sociology toward an exploration and analysis of sport at a grassroots level including attention to families. Contributions include Dyck (2000; 1995) who looked at the involvement of parents in their children's sport, Fine (1987) on the practices of boys in Little League baseball, and Thompson (1999) who wrote about the centrality of mothers' labour to their families' tennis activities. These studies focus on one particular group – parents, boys and mothers. There is no literature on whole families doing a particular sport together, taking into account the views and activities of varying family members in a particular sporting endeavour.

My research aims are two-fold. The first is to contribute to filling the gap in the literature on family and cricket. The second is to look at the place of cricket in the lives of elite first generation diasporic Indian families in Singapore. To achieve these aims, I spent three months in Singapore making observations about the local cricket scene by attending matches, watching and participating in training sessions, as well as conducting interviews with a variety of people, a large number of whom were family units where the children and fathers were active participants in the local cricket scene. In the course of interviews with families, I asked questions like – What is the role of cricket in the NRI community? What forms do cricket take within the nuclear family? What is the role of cricket in the family? What is the role of cricket for individuals? How do cricket practices in Singapore differ from those in India? All these questions, data gathered and analysis, led me to my key issue – How does cricket get into the 'blood' of NRI children, thereby producing and reproducing an "authentic" Indian identity in Singapore? My research suggests that this is done through involvement in the cricket field, an arena in which I found fathers, mothers, sons and daughters participating. Cricket emerged as a major field of identity construction for professional middle class NRI family members in Singapore. And the answer to how children become Indian in Singapore is through the concerted effort of getting cricket into their 'blood'.

Methodology

Here, I will detail the methods that I used to gather data whilst in the field. It is important to do so because methods of data collection impact upon the kind of information gathered. Due to circumstances I found myself in whilst in the field, I had to adopt a high degree of ‘methodological flexibility’ (Amit 2000: 12). Thus, in spite of planning and imagining (however vaguely) how I wanted to go about my fieldwork (for example, I had originally not thought it possible to play on a girls’ team but by doing so I gained greater insight into that specific area), nothing was set in concrete. As Amit put it, “It is the circumstances which defined the method rather than the method defining the circumstances” (2000: 11). In the process of conducting fieldwork, situations, to a degree, shape what one finds. They may shape the form of the research argument, as demonstrated in my case. Initially, I started off looking broadly at cricket and the NRI community, and over the course of my fieldwork, due to the kind of data that emerged and the contacts I made, the focus narrowed to families, children and cricket. This choice for the focus on family was because I found a loosely integrated ‘community’⁷ amongst the families I interviewed. Some knew of each other well, for example, the Patels and the Kapoors, they interacted with each other outside of the cricket arena (i.e. inviting each other to their houses for gatherings and meals). Other families involved in cricket had less to do with one another. The parents were recognised as parents of the children who participate in cricket, a point of formal or categorical identity (Sansom 1980: 138, cited in Dyck 1995: 222).

The question of doing fieldwork at ‘home’ or ‘away’ was somewhat difficult to me. I was born and grew up in Singapore for fourteen years before moving to New Zealand as an international student. I have lived in New Zealand for most of the last eight years, only periodically leaving for vacations. At the same time that Singapore is my country of citizenship, I did not feel entirely comfortable being ‘home’. In fact, during my fieldwork stay there, I found myself exploring the country as a tourist would. In one instance, while I was waiting on the corner of a traffic junction for the light to change, I looked up to admire a skyscraper. A Chinese gentleman came up beside me and said “That’s the Westin Stamford. What country are you from?” Did I look that

⁷ Community as defined by Benedict Anderson (1991) as a focus on a commonality. Community is not just one fixed thing. Like families, there are arguably numerous and varied forms of ‘community’. People can simultaneously belong to a number of them.

foreign? I was a little taken aback and did not want to have to explain my situation so I simply replied that I was from New Zealand. This was not a one-off incident. At the same time as I was trying to get to my ‘cultural roots’, finding out what it meant to be a Chinese Singaporean, I was categorised as foreign or ‘alien’ by my ‘fellow countrymen’.



[Figure 1.4] The Westin Stamford (left) (source: author)

Not only was it the Singaporeans who saw me as ‘different’ but so too did the NRIs that I encountered. They found me hard to place. Was I a Singaporean or was I a New Zealander? I was even criticised by Sumit, a qualified cricket umpire, active player and coach, for not knowing enough about Singapore.

- Sumit: You don’t know? You are Singaporean and I know. I know more things than you.
- Yan: I haven’t lived here for the last eight years. Don’t look at me!
- Sumit: Oh okay. You should always update on your nation’s things. Always. Not a hundred percent, but you have to reach a basic level.
- Yan: See, the thing is that when I left Singapore, I didn’t like the country. I only started liking it recently.

Only in recent times have I begun to appreciate Singapore. It is ironic that at the same time that I was trying to come to terms with my Singaporean identity, I learnt more about Singapore through my Indian informants. Some of them had after all lived in Singapore for just about as long, if not longer, than I. One matter in which I gained

considerable knowledge from speaking to the parents was about the Singapore schooling system. Here is an excerpt from an interview with Mohan and Rupali Kapoor in which they educated me on the current teaching practices of mathematics at school. I found them very different now from when I was at school. On this occasion, I could relate more to the Indian parents despite them being more than ten years my senior.

- Rupali: ... the maths level in Singapore is extremely high.
- Mohan: ... maths is taught with real life application right from the very beginning.
- Yan: Didn't use to be like that when I was at school.
- Mohan: Now, it's very different. I mean, these children have been learning maths by models for the last few years. So they are taught that they take this much, and then you draw this line and then you see how much is total this line. It's a very different, it's a very different, very different way of teaching. Maths is taught in a very practical way. We always had multiplication tables. Two times two is four, two times three is six, and we had to remember the table right?
- Yan: Yah.
- Mohan: They don't remember.
- Yan: They don't?
- Mohan: They teach them set multiplication in a very different way. For us, multiplication was multiplication. Something would multiply something to multiply something to get something.
- Rupali: I think [the] Singapore system is good if you are a bright child. If not, [the] Singapore system is not for you. Then it's better to go to the Indian system [with the traditional method of teaching].
- Mohan: The old Indian system.

Rupali also taught me about the changes in the secondary school admission's process.

- Rupali: Now the points system is gone. In fact, you'll be amazed at the changes that have taken place. In another two years, PSLE [Primary

School Leaving Examination⁸] will no longer be important. This year, they have started a system of direct admissions.

Yan: To secondary school?

Rupali: To secondary school. So many kids have got in without the PSLE. PSLE [is] still to come but they have already secured seats in the secondary schools based on either their marks, or their CCA [Co-Curricular Activity]. I mean, something which they have excelled in, and if that school is a specialist of that. So they are planning to open more and more seats in the coming years. Then primary school will become important.

In the words of Cris Shore “... I also learned to see my own society as they saw it” (1999: 43). Shore also notes that the world view of his informants “contained an explicit critique of [his] own society” (*ibid*: 42). When some informants critiqued aspects of Singaporean society, I found myself automatically defending my culture and country. In the following conversation, I find myself trying to explain, to three Indian men– Nirmal, Akash and Bharat, why there is a lack of community spirit in Singapore.

Nirmal: And you make a lot of friends playing cricket. Like a new kid comes to the block, normally you’d probably take a long while to get to know him but then you’re playing five on five and there are only four people in your team and you see the guy sitting there, you call him. It helps build, at least amongst the youngsters, among the Indian community, helps build rapport.

Yan: That’s great because I’ve lived next to my neighbours for like twenty years and I hardly know them at all.

Nirmal: Yah. I don’t think it’ll happen in India.

Akash: Neighbours you’ve lived next to for twenty years and you’ve not spoken to them?

Yan: I know. It’s really sad, eh.

Akash: At least after I moved to Singapore, my neighbours on either side are very good, both sides. At first, when I was staying in a rental apartment, I used to greet them. To me, it’s very stressing when I see

⁸ Students sit the Primary School Leaving Examination in the last year of primary school. The score they achieve determines what secondary schools they can be admitted into.

- people not talking to their neighbours for years and years and years. I don't know how. What happens in an emergency?
- Nirmal: Call the security guard.
- Bharat: What would you do in an emergency? How could you live in a community that doesn't talk to each other?
- Akash: It's strange to me...
- Yan: ... it's more like you live your own life.
- Nirmal: It's a big city.
- Yan: India is big but people seem to know one another. They know their community. But here, it's just... (*interrupted*)
- Akash: What is the main reason? Going back to the subject. Not only you but generalising.
- Yan: It's very competitive. And people here are all for themselves and their families. They don't care for their neighbours. I think it's a lack of sympathy and compassion.
- Nirmal: Neighbour doesn't talk to you so you don't talk. It's not my fault. I mean, the neighbour is not talking to me.
- Akash: You [Nirmal] do the same thing?
- Nirmal: Yah. Why should I go? They'll think that I'm weird. They should talk to me.
- Yan: Maybe there's a lack of community and government is trying to instil it artificially.
- Nirmal: It's like 10% Malay, 10% Indian [of the national ethnic make-up].

Thus far, I have demonstrated that there is a melding of professional (as a researcher) and personal experiences in ethnographic fieldwork. There is one more personal matter that I would like to highlight. It is that my knowledge of cricket is, at best, basic. On a scale of one to ten, one represents almost no knowledge of cricket. This is best illustrated with a comment from a Singapore born Indian youth whom I sat next to on the train. We got talking and I mentioned that I was doing research relating to cricket. His response was "Cricket, that's something like baseball right?" The other extreme on the scale would be someone who knows everything about cricket, from knowing how to play the game to competition statistics. An Indian friend once described a person like this as "a walking cricket encyclopaedia". On this scale, I would place my cricket knowledge at about a four. Thus, during my fieldwork, I found having to sit through game after game, although they were usually half day

matches, a rather arduous task. That was something that I had not foreseen when I decided to embark upon this research. My drive to gather data on the relationships and dynamics between cricket and Indians kept me motivated and at the cricket grounds, weekend after weekend. Through observation, I learnt more about the game – the rules, structure, etiquette and techniques. Despite my efforts to learn the game however, my knowledge was still nominal in the eyes of many of my informants, particularly the men. This is what Sumit said to me toward the end of our interview.

Sumit: ... But only thing is, my advice is since you are doing this, you should know the basics [of cricket]. Then you have to question to me as a cricketer. Your investigation on the cricket subject. You have to know the basics, then you can question and get the right answers.

Unlike some anthropologists, who enter a field that they have experience in or in depth knowledge about, my case was one of entering a field as an outsider to the practice of interest. The most prominent difference is that I was a female entering a male dominated arena. At the start, I thought that going into the field as a person wanting to learn about the sport might help me understand the process of learning cricket, but this plan did not work out. Noel Dyck talked about how it would have been difficult for him to conduct his study into the social construction of children's sport in Canada had he not been a parent-participant to start with (2000: 42). He emphasises that it is crucial to spend extensive periods of time observing and taking part in parental encounters to gain a true understanding of the phenomenon. This is something I tried very hard to do but found difficult because I am not a parent.

I may not have been a parent but over the course of my three months of fieldwork in Singapore, I adopted and was assigned many family-like roles. I interacted with many parents who were involved in their children's cricketing activities. With regards to the children, I observed them primarily during cricket training sessions over weekends at the Singapore Cricket Association (SCA). This club is located in an area of Singapore called Kallang. Most informants simply referred to the club grounds as 'Kallang'. This location, especially on Saturday morning, between 8 to 10, was when the children's cricket practice took place and was a primary site for me to gather data as well as to source potential interviewees. All of the families that I interviewed had one

or more children playing there. This is *the* place to go for cricket training. One of the reasons for this is that all the coaches are qualified coaches who themselves compete internationally. Many herald from India where they had played at national and international levels. For example, Dharma, the coach of the girls' squad, had previously played for the Indian national under-19 squad as well as in numerous national level competitions. Regarding my roles, not only was I a researcher, one way the children saw me was as a writer or reporter. This was the best way I could describe what I was doing to the children. One boy responded by asking why I would want to do research on him and said "I'm not famous!"

In relation to the children, the other roles I had were that of a stranger, who over time became a familiar face, an adult, and an 'aunt'. I found the latter rather horrifying. This was the first time anyone had called me an aunt and it made me feel very old! A mother, Anita, related to me that her son, Pramod, was upset with me for not taking him to see one of his favourite Bollywood actors, Hrithik Roshan, while the crew was filming at the Singapore zoo. She relayed to me what Pramod had said "Why didn't Aunty Yan take me to see Hrithik?" Other instances is which I was seen as an 'aunt' were when I was made to cut fruit for the boys during their drink breaks, being in charge of drink supplies and keeping an eye on the boys' cricket gear.

To mothers like Anita, I was a friend, a peer, a person to talk to, to pass the time while her husband, Sandeep, played cricket. It was a common occurrence to have mothers approach me during children's cricket games. It is probably because there was a high level of curiosity about me as I am a single young woman, freely moving amongst women and men. The mothers would position themselves next to me so that we could talk because most of them got tired of watching the games within short periods of time. To the girls I played cricket with, I was a fellow cricketer, a team member, a friend, a coach and a cheer leader.

Reflecting upon my time in the field, I see that I got quite involved. My experience was multi-dimensional: intellectual, emotional and physical as Michrina and Richards write in their book on ethnographic fieldwork (1996: 114). I can attest to the fact that no matter how many times I got hit by a so-called 'softie' (these are 'soft' cricket balls that we played with during practice), they hurt and left me black and blue for

days. Here is an excerpt from my fieldnotes on my second cricket session with the girls at Kallang.

If rough play, bruises, and scrapes were associated only with boys, and girls were meant to be gentle and docile, then I can see why cricket is a sport dominated by males. I had a first hand experience of being hit, not once, but several times, from head to toe. It felt as if the girl I had been paired up with bore a grudge against me but it surely was not the case. I think it was more due to the lack of my honed skills. Thank goodness we were using a couple of soft balls for batting practice. I was hit in the legs a couple of times and had a near miss to the head. The hit to my left shin left me a nice red swell and Sonia (the girl I was partnered with) was so apologetic. After her balls hit me a couple of times, she slowed down her batting so as to try to avoid hitting me any further. I was beginning to wonder whether participant observation was such a good idea!



[Figure 1.5] Me batting during a match (source: author)

I had a thoroughly enjoyable time playing with the girls. It was a great opportunity to be ‘in’ but not necessarily ‘of’ the culture. My mother might see me as being ‘of’ the culture, once yelling out the window “You’ve turned into a typical Indian boy!”, while I was practicing my bowling on our driveway. But I think that my growing obsession with cricket reflected in the hours I spent playing at home grew more out of a desire to perform well on Saturdays than for the love of the sport itself. Once I stopped attending training sessions, so too did my practice at home. I was able to extricate myself from the field.

Not only did I use Saturdays to learn more about cricket, I also used them as opportunities to get to know the girls who were involved. At the start, being the newest recruit and oldest player by virtue of age (also being older than the coach who was merely a year younger than me), I found it difficult to get into the girls' network. However, over the course of successive Saturday practices, we got to know one another and most of them began to open up. From this small group (ranging from eight to twelve girls each week) I got one of my key informants, Neha. In addition to interviewing Neha and her family, I also elicited information from other girls either directly by asking and talking to them, or overhearing conversations.

In addition to Kallang, other cricket key sites included that of the Singapore Indian Association (IA⁹), the Ceylon Sports Club (CSC) and the Dempsey cricket ground. Cricket matches took place at these three grounds every weekend. Because it is a cultural/social organisation, the IA grounds are also used for other sports like soccer, while the other two grounds are reserved solely for cricket. The IA and CSC were used primarily for adult matches. These were Singapore Cricket League¹⁰ games. The Dempsey ground was used for boys' games. I attended many games, watching both adults and children play and took the opportunity to talk to whoever was present.

There was one key figure, Mr Singh, who I met through the IA who proved to be a valuable informant. Mr Singh is a key figure in the cricket scene in Singapore. His history of involvement in cricket included representing Singapore as a member of the national cricket team. Now that he has retired from playing competitive cricket and also from his full time job, he is even more involved in all aspects of cricket, from the children's level (i.e. helping to organise the boys' tournament), to the national level (organising League games), to the international level (he acts as the selector and manager of various age-grade national teams). It is Mr Singh who informed me of the

⁹ The Singapore Indian Association was set up in 1923. It is intimately tied into the history of Indians in Singapore. The Association promotes the 'intellectual', 'cultural' and 'general welfare of members'. A large part of the club is the self-regulating Board of Games. This section evolved due to the high level of sport participation of the members. The Association excels in sport, especially cricket, hockey, football and billiards.

¹⁰ The Singapore Cricket League is the premier cricket competition in Singapore. It is made up of four divisions. A total of forty-six teams took part in the competition this year. Teams come from cultural and sports clubs (e.g. Singapore Indian Association and Singapore Cricket Club) as well as companies (e.g. JP Morgan and Polaris)

children's training sessions at Kallang and he also introduced me to other key people in the cricket scene.

Along with Mr Singh, I interviewed other notable figures in the Singapore cricket scene. These included Mr Subra, the administrator of the SCA. I interviewed Sumit Prasad, an active League player and umpire and coach. I spoke with a couple of other full-time coaches and competitive cricket players. I also spoke to Mr Neethi, the secretary of the SCA. I conducted semi-structured interviews with five families in total, all of whom had children who played cricket actively at Kallang. These interviews varied. In some cases, I interviewed the whole family together. In others, I interviewed parents separately or spoke to the mother and child together and then the father separately. I thought that by doing so, different comments and ideas would be elicited because I noticed early on that when I interviewed the whole family together, the father tended to dominate the conversation. In the case of three men who worked for the same company, I interviewed them together. Two of them are married and have a child each. One is single.

I also interviewed a couple who had no children. The wife, Kavita, was my Hindi teacher and she had also taught a number of the boys who were heavily involved in cricket in the 2004 season. She has no interest in cricket what-so-ever. The interview with her proved insightful as to the degree to which the boys' obsession for cricket filters into the classroom setting.

Kavita: ... their minds are always on cricket and playing cricket... they are very interested in cricket, in watching [the] cricket and talking about [the] cricket more and more, in the class.

I gained data through a variety of ways, in a number of different places, and through a range of different people. Each encounter provided valuable insight, giving me a unique perspective into the world of NRIs and cricket.

Thesis structure

The conversations with my informants are recorded verbatim. My intention is to provide a real sense of how they speak (Indian English).

The rest of the thesis is divided into seven chapters. In chapter two, I outline the theoretical concepts central to my thesis. Chapter three provides the background necessary for understanding the significance of cricket in the lives of Indians. The chapter also contextualizes cricket within Singapore and concludes by linking cricket and the Indian diaspora together. Chapters four to seven contain the bulk of my ethnographic data. In chapter four, I give the accounts of cricket in lives of three families. By doing so, I illustrate the families' varying degree of interest, involvement, and investment in the sport. Chapter five is an analysis of the stories told by the fathers about cricket. Chapter six focuses on mothers. I look at how these mothers 'produce' holistic and healthy Indian children through cricket, their labour involved in maintaining and reproducing the institution of cricket, and, what mothers gain from being 'cricket mothers'. In chapter seven, I explore the relationship between children (boys and girls) and cricket. I conclude in chapter eight by drawing together my findings and analysis.

Doing diaspora

Theoretical concepts

Theoretical aims

A number of theoretical issues frame this thesis. My study draws on the combination of arguments concerning migration, diaspora, transnationalism, and identity. This strategy will be explored first in this section. The question ‘how is diaspora done?’ will also be addressed. I look at a range of ways through which diasporas (more specifically Indian diasporas) attempt to stay connected to their ethnic/cultural identities and ancestral homelands. Following from that, other theoretical issues pertaining specifically to my study such as sport, parenting, children and agency, narratives and Bourdieu’s notion of capital will be explored. These issues are important for my thesis because they enable me to analyse the varied data that I gathered over the course of my fieldwork and allows me to contextualise and make sense of it within the Singaporean Indian diaspora. I use Madan’s (2000) work on Indian diaspora which draws on the work of Bhabha and Foucault, and Lareau (2003, 2002) on the ‘concerted cultivation’ of children by their parents who strive for upward mobility and social distinction. The work of the latter draws on Bourdiean concepts of reproduction.

Diaspora and Identity

World geographical mobility is a norm. This has created “an increasingly creole world” (Hannerz 1992: 261) in which lives are no longer conventionally bound or determined by space. People migrate for various reasons including the search for economic gain, escape from conflict (as in the case of refugees), and to attain a ‘better life’. Migration results in the crossing of cultural as well as geographical boundaries, and the outcome is often transformation and change in people as personal and social boundaries shift (Gardner 1995: vii). Thus, Gardner suggests that “migration involves

a constant process of reinvention and self-redefinition” (*ibid*). This makes the world of migrants complex and (potentially) full of contradictions.

In the 1990s, the concept of ‘diaspora’ gained common currency among social scientists dealing with migration.

The term ‘diaspora’ not only transmits a certain sense of shared destiny and predicament, but also an inherent will to preservation and celebration of the ancestral culture, and an equally inherent impulse towards forging and maintaining links with other migrant groups as well as the ‘old’ country (Hansen 2002: 2).

This quote is a suggestion of how to capture these relationships and of how diasporic people attempt to make sense of their experiences. The statement also serves to highlight the complexity and contradictions that exist for migrants. While the above explanation of diasporic relationships emphasises links with the past and homeland, the concept does not refer exclusively to a longing for the past. Belasco (2004¹¹) argues that while diasporic people are “quintessentially modern in placing great hope in the future”, they are also “seeking to anchor their identity in nostalgia for the past”. For many migrants, there is a desire for ‘authenticity’ which is fixed in the past and has to be carried forward into the present and future. This can prove to be a challenging task because things of the past arguably, have to be modified to make them relevant, highlighting the constructed nature of identity. Thus, it is suggested that diasporic people simultaneously seek cultural continuity and change. The complexity of the project of diasporic identity construction is evidenced in the need to invest more time and effort into the project of social reproduction which Bourdieu calls “permanence in and through change” (2001: 91).

Sandhya Shukla defines diaspora as a “dispersion, which effectively compresses time and space such that it enables the experiences of many places at what would appear to be one moment” (2001: 551). It is argued that this experience of dispersion results in the existence of real and imagined worlds for migrants. While trying to maintain the sameness of home, resisting the loss of their culture, nation and homeland, they also

¹¹ Comment by Warren Belasco on the back cover of Krishnendu, R. (2004) *The Migrant's Table: Meals and Memories of Bengali-American Households*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

live and adapt to new environments. This results in an identity that constantly shifts across continents and through time. One significant way migrants retain their past is through “imaginaries in social life or fictional narrative” (Shukla 2001: 552). These stories offer what Shukla suggests as a “misleading coherence or stability to categories that have real power in the lives of many people” (*ibid*). Story telling is an effective means of reasserting one’s history and identity. By eliminating inconsistencies and telling similar, generalised narratives of particular events from the past, stories serve to unify diasporic people in their common memory. This phenomenon manifested amongst the fathers I interviewed as they all told similar ‘cricket stories’ from their youth in India. By narrating similar incidents, their commonality gave their nostalgia concreteness, thereby reinforcing one another’s memories and their shared history. Kurotani’s (2005) study of Japanese corporate wives in America suggests this identity memory work is vital to the reinforcement of their identity.

Madan proposes that identity is found in the intrinsic link between three factors: race, nation and culture. He terms this relationship the “law of truth” (2000: 27). Citing Homi Bhabha, Madan notes that the ultimate goal of every human being is to achieve the “fullness” of identity, in which “fragmentation is articulated into seamlessness and closure” (Bhabha cited in Madan 2000: 33). For Foucault (1982: 781), identity is crucial because he believes that the power of subjectivity lies in that it “categorises the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his identity, and imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him” (cited in Madan 2000: 26). Thus to be classed as an Indian, means certain things to the individual and at the same time, certain traits are recognisable by others (Indians and non-Indians) as being Indian because the label imposes a set of expectations.

The use of the complex term ‘diaspora’ is largely limited to the academic sphere. Madan suggests that it can be used as a “theoretical abstraction of a complex and complicated realm of subjectivity, identity, experience and representation” (2000: 25). While the term diaspora may be a powerful uniting force, it is viewed as inconsistent and context specific. Likewise, a term like ‘Indian’ can potentially serve to unite all Indian people from the subcontinent and across the globe because it eliminates

differences like that of language, religion, culture, etc. In the Singapore context, 'Indian' can be used to describe three distinct social sub-categories which see very limited interaction – Singaporean Indians, NRIs and Indian transient guest workers.

Whereas academics use terms like 'diaspora', 'diasporic identity' and 'diasporic consciousness', the more common terms used by diasporic people themselves in everyday language to describe their experiences are 'the community' and 'our people'. This serves for one group to be able to juxtapose themselves and their identity as a unit against 'others'. Madan argues that in fact, as a result of their hybridity and fragmentation, diasporic people are an other to no nation except the concept of 'nation' itself (2000: 33).

The concept of identity is innate to people but it is rarely spoken aloud because it is suggested by Levine that there is a "sacred inarticulatedness" about it (in Fiske 1992: 158, cited in Madan 2000: 25). The reason for its inarticulatedness is that to enter into a discourse about identity is to be inevitably confronted by complexities and contradictions. 'Diasporic consciousness', an articulation of identity, is "an intellectualization of [the] existential condition" (Madan 2000: 25). It is the reality of being intellectual and of knowing and understanding, being reflective and reflexive. Articulating diaspora and mapping ethnoscares (Appadurai 1996) is about articulating new identities that can legitimately exist and coexist outside the rigors of nation building. Hence, diaspora is a constant process of negotiating one's identity to answer the question – who am I? It is however, not often that the question of – who am I? – is raised directly. Most often, identity is something that is lived and questions about it are indirect.

The Indian diaspora

Before I address the issue of 'how identity is lived', I will give a brief overview of the use of the literature on 'Indian diaspora'. This term refers to migrants who originate from India (Parekh 1993, cited in Rayaprol 2001: 167). Bhikhu Parekh attributes political, economic and cultural reasons for the dispersal of Indians across the globe. A unique factor amongst migrant Indians is the lack of horizontal links between

Indians. This meant that Indian diasporas are culturally and socially varied. Differences pertaining to things like caste, class, language, religion, culture, regional origins, etc. serve as distinct divisions amongst Indians and these are also identifiable in Indian diasporic communities.

Under British rule, thousands of Indians were sent away from their homeland as indentured labourers to British colonies. Many, upon completion of their contracts, decided to stay on and make their new localities home in the hope of starting and building a better life. Due to a lack of funds and technological limitation, communication with India was limited and ties were often weak or severed. This meant a diminished ability to retain aspects of their Indian culture and a propensity toward assimilation into local customs and attitudes (Rayaprol 1997: 5).

It was only after India's independence in 1947 that strong links by diasporic Indians were made back to their ancestral country and fellow Indians across the world. One key reason was the change in the social and economic profile of the new wave of Indian migrants. They are stereotypically represented as wealthy businessmen or professionals, many of whom migrate to the West and are characterised by upward mobility. Due to their relatively comfortable financial situation and the resources necessary to maintain aspects of identity, this Indian diaspora is often capable of being reproducers of 'Indian culture' in the foreign settings. Rayaprol sees the usage of the term 'diaspora' as an umbrella label under which a unified identity can be forged through invoking "common myths of origin" (2001: 167). This works favourably for the Indian government which Rayaprol notes is "eager for investments from non-resident Indians (NRIs) as well as Indians abroad... seeking to create a favourable atmosphere by speaking of the transnational Indian community as a unified, diasporic entity" (Rayaprol 2001: 167). A consequence of this is the retention of stronger ties to India for this group.

How is diaspora done?

Diaspora is not homogenous. Neither is it a

heterogeneous blooming of distinctive identities independent of one another. People evoke the past in highly *selective ways* and construct a present that is a *hybrid of multiple cultures and experiences*. As a result, neither nostalgia nor diversity remain unproblematically pure and simple. The ‘homelands’ people reconstruct tend to be fictive communities, part real and part imagined (Rayaprol 2001: 164, italics mine).

In the task of ‘doing diaspora’, making links back to one’s ‘homeland’, there is a selection of ways in which diaspora construct their “hybrid of multiple cultures and experiences”. Sifting through the literature on diaspora, six broad categories are identified by researchers: cultural, social/community, religious, technological/media and material consumption. I will detail examples of how each is done in various diasporas but with a primary focus on how Indians do diaspora. But before that, I want to use Aparna Rayaprol’s (1997; 2001) studies of south Indian Hindu immigrants in Pittsburgh to contextualise this section of doing diaspora and retaining Indianness. The value of Rayaprol’s study is that she looks at the adaptive strategies of first generation migrants (1997) and follows on with a study of the responses of the children to their parents’ efforts of Indian enculturation (2001). This is useful for my study because it is an illustrative case of how a particular first generation Indian diaspora carried out their projects of instilling Indianness in their children, followed by the response of the second generation to their parents and to Indian traditions. The second aspect is particularly important because taking into account the agency of the children and their transcultural interactions, it looks at what they have done with these Indian traditions, whether they have been adopted and if they have, how they have been modified to fit into the new context. This is relevant for my analysis of (re)producing Indian identity amongst the NRI children when seeking to reflect on how the second generation NRI may articulate their identities in the future.

The Indians that Rayaprol focused on in her initial fieldwork (1997) are people who frequent the Sri Venkateswara temple. She found that the immigrants established and maintained the temple with the goal of recreating a ‘community’ which was based on the familiar phenomena of religion, language and caste. In the absence of extended

family and kin, they sought to establish a close-knit ‘community’ which had a “monolithic sodality with its distinctive identity” (2001: 174). It was a mythical community in the sense that for this deterritorialised group of immigrants, they had to live in what Appadurai calls “imagined worlds” (1990). For them, the crucial building block for the construction of this imagined and new cultural space, was nostalgia. Their nostalgia was “imaginary memory” (Armstrong 1982), a symbolic “act of cultural return” which gave the ‘community’ a solidarity. It was symbolic because in the case of this Indian diaspora, the idea of return was simply that, an idea (Nadarajah 1994, cited in Rayaprol 2001: 174-175). Their move from India was permanent. For them, the temple acted as “a world – a psychic space – in which the community lives and acts out its identity (Clothey 1983: 196, cited in Rayaprol 2001: 175).

Many of the study’s first generation migrants remarked of how ‘authentically Indian’ the temple was. They drew selectively on their nostalgic images to interpret the new temple setting. By doing so, they “forged coherent identities that are located in a warmly remembered past” (Rayaprol 2001: 175). Men and women shared the feelings of nostalgia. Women however, were dominant in the tasks of actively giving the memories concrete shape. They did this through things like the organisation of traditional Indian festivals, the cooking and distribution of ethnic food, by dressing in traditional ethnic garb, and by conducting religious, language and cultural classes. Indian women took on their traditional roles as transmitters of culture in the temple setting as unpaid keepers. They were considered the “embodiments of memory”. Compared to their male counterparts, women were seen to hang onto their tradition, culture and memories of the past more. Thus, the job of reproducing it fell upon their shoulders.

In addition to supporting one another’s nostalgia through the temple setting, two other factors refreshed their memories. One was regular visits home and the other was contemporary cultural products. These enabled the Indian diaspora to keep up with the cultural milieu of their ‘homeland’. The latter factor is of particular importance because nostalgia in the late 20th century is ‘consumerist’ (Robertson 1992: 159 cited in Rayaprol 2001: 176). In an increasingly consumer-driven world, tangible products arguably form the epicentre of identities. Commodities that exemplify India and are eagerly consumed by diasporic Indians include the latest ethnic fashion, films, spices,

and speciality foods, and in my case, the sport of cricket that characterises Indians and Indianness.

Through their expressions of nostalgia, commonalities in their ancestry, history, the present and the immigrant situation are reinforced. Thus there was a drive to maintain both symbolic and emotional links, which led Indians to the temple. Far be it from purely being a moral or religious endeavour, the temple was very much a place to socialise and develop community spirit. Occasions like the celebration of festivals and weddings in the temple speak of this.

Whilst parents attributed socialising with other like-minded Indians as a key factor for themselves, they expressed the sentiment that the temple was a crucial place for their children to find their roots and socialise them into traditions of the adult community. Under the primary supervision of women, who had taken on key roles in the temple's public organisation, children were acculturated into Indian practices and values through activities ranging from classical Indian dance to Indian languages to Indian drama. The temple community acted as the extended family in the process of inculcating Indianness into the children through immersing them in a consciously created Indian environment.

Much of the second generation grew up going to the temple. However, when they reached adolescence, there was a sharp decline in their attendance. The researcher deducted that the reason for this was that they lacked the same connections and nostalgia for the 'homeland' as their parents. While the parents demonstrated an unambiguous 'Indian' identity, their children had to come to terms with a hyphenated identity, American on the one hand and Indian on the other¹². They had to come to terms with their own self-image as well as the labels that are imposed upon them. Therefore, their self-identification was characterised by constant shifts.

¹² Rayaprol found that the prefacing of which identity varied between males and females. The males tended to preface American, thus calling themselves American-Indians, whereas the trend amongst females was to preface Indian and call themselves Indian-Americans. Females identified more strongly with their Indian heritage which mirrored the roles their mothers adopted as the transmitters and reproducers of culture.

Interestingly, for this group of American born Indians, there was not a complete rejection of their Indian heritage, but instead they respected their culture and even flaunted it in the new multicultural marketplace of America. Many examples were cited. For instance, some Indian music that was introduced to the children by the parents was remixed with rap and reggae, creating a new genre of music called *desi*¹³ music. Other Indian youth were happy listening to Indian music (more contemporary than traditional) and watching Indian movies. Some adolescents took to wearing hip hop gear and brand name clothing that was acceptable to American youth culture, instead of wearing traditional ethnic clothing. However, females liked dressing-up in Indian clothing like saris and salwar kameez for formal occasions. Many were multilingual, speaking, reading and writing at least one Indian language. A number of them even expressed the desire to become more fluent in these languages. All loved eating Indian food and some even knew how to cook Indian. They followed Indian news on the internet, and some college students learned more about their heritage and history by taking up courses in South Asian studies. Another key way of reinforcing their Indian heritage was through associating with fellow Indians. Identifying themselves mostly as Hindu and Sikh, they had a tendency to associate with other Indians in social or political groups on college campuses. However, despite the religious label, they did not feel that religion was a major part of their identity. This explained their lack of attendance at the temple. The young people generally felt comfortable mixing with people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds. Due to this mix, many took to watching American football and baseball, for example, instead of cricket like their parents.

Self-perception amongst the young people differed by gender. On the whole, females were more likely to assert Indianness due to their childhood socialisation (parents making them do classical Indian dance, for example). Like their mothers, the ‘burden’ of tradition still lies upon the shoulders of second generation females.

... questions of tradition and modernity have, since the nineteenth century, been debated on the literal and figurative bodies of women. It thus comes as no surprise that the burden of negotiating the new world is borne disproportionately by women,

¹³ The word ‘desi’ is taken from Hindi and literally means “from the country” (Diethrich 1999: 45). Diethrich found that *desi* music more accurately represented the hyphenated identities by melding both the Indian and the Western.

whose behaviour and desires, real or imagined, become litmus test for the South Asian Community's anxieties or sense of well-being... It is women who are called on to preserve the ways of the old country (Mani 1993: 34-35 cited in Rayaprol 2001: 183).

Because of this, the behaviour of women is especially closely monitored. The women did not however, feel burdened. The expectation of middle class Indians that their children do well in school and career went hand in hand with the traditional expectations of marriage, dating and family life. On the whole, the differences between the genders went undisputed amongst parents and their children. The stark differences lay in respect to the ways the two generations went about retaining their Indianness. The first generation opted to preserve traditional activities and tried to inculcate the same things in their children. This worked during their foundational years until the youth gained a degree of independence. With exposure to other cultures, the young people had to come to terms with their own hyphenated American-Indian identity, all of whom chose to retain the latter half albeit in different hybrid ways to their parents. The Indian identification practices of the second generation were generally more acceptable in mainstream society which demonstrates the influence of locality on the shaping of their identity.

Doing diaspora

Yan, you speak Hindi, play cricket, watch Bollywood movies, eat and cook Indian food, own Indian outfits, have an Indian boyfriend, have been to India. You're very much an Indian!

Anita, a mother

As illustrated in the case of Hindu Indians in Pittsburgh, Indians do diasporic identities in many ways. The most significant difference is the way that the two generations of diasporic Indians go about connecting personally and communally with their 'homeland' and ancestral culture. The first generation, or as Mishra (1996) calls them "old" Indian diaspora, did it through exclusivity (cited in Diethrich 1999: 36). Relying heavily on nostalgia, they attempted to recreate their culture through the temple. The second generation, being more mobile (literally being able to commute

and also being more mobile in terms of class) and exposed to a wider variety of cultures, approached doing Indianness differently. The latter form of doing diaspora, what Mishra terms new “border” Indian diaspora, has been identified in several locations outside of India. Mishra argues that this form enables Indians to participate in their new society. All forms of doing diaspora, both so-called old and new, are still identifiable because these are not fixed identities that Indians of various generations select. Rather, several studies appear to identify similar forms of diasporic Indian identities. This study is one such case. In the following section, I explore the various ways of doing diaspora, most of which were illustrated by Rayaprol’s study. There are many ways of reproducing Indianness in Singapore, many of which are similar to the Rayaprol’s case. Although I never explicitly asked my informants about these, they arose in conversations, comments made and from observations I made whilst in the field. In my research, I found that the central ingredient in inculcating Indian identity amongst NRIs is cricket. Over the course of my literature review, I only found one piece written by Madan (2000) which identified cricket as the key feature of doing diasporic Indian identity. The case was specific to Australia during the World Series Cricket (WSC). My research on the other hand, is about the daily lives of NRI families and their involvement in grassroots cricket.

Before I talk about cricket in the NRI community, I will briefly illustrate the various categories of doing diaspora amongst Indians. It should be noted that there are overlaps between the different types that are exemplified below.

Religion

Religious institutions provide the solid base of cultural-religious identification and it is from that base that migrant and diaspora people take actions to cope successfully with the demands of the host society (Baumann 2004: 181).

According to Kim Knott, religion has become the self-defining feature of outsiders’ labels for migrant people (1997: 756, cited in Baumann 2004: 181). The establishment of religious institutions and buildings is often one of the first projects of diasporas. This was demonstrated by the first generation Indian Hindu migrants to Pittsburgh in Rayaprol’s study. Australian sociologist Gary D. Bouma proposed a ‘theory of

religious settlement' (1996: 53-57 cited in Baumann 2004: 171). He argued that historically, the establishment of religious institutions, whether it be churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, pagodas, etc., were crucial for each immigrating cultural-national people moving to Australia.

Religious institutions are important for migrants for a number of reasons. First, it is a public affair which can act as a driving force to unite a group, particularly minority groups. Secondly, outside of one's homeland, there is an increase in the perceived value and significance of religious belonging because of the potential threat of loss of culture and religion. Thirdly, it is a way to maintain the migrant's reference to their home country, thereby producing and reproducing a shared identity amongst the diaspora. Religion has the potential to mark out an ethnic group's identity for themselves as well as to others. However, religion is only made prominent and serves as a vital marker in certain circumstances. It is malleable and changes over time and thus may not be of prime importance all the time and in all contexts. This is the reason Baumann gives for the neglect of the study of religion in the contexts of migrant populations (Baumann 2004). Despite the modern trends of secularization, Baumann argues that religion still has a crucial part to play in the processes of settlement.

Religion clearly plays a part in the settlement of Indians in Singapore. Starting with the first Hindu temple in 1827 that was erected by Narayana Pillay, the number of Indian religious institutions has grown to close to a hundred (possibly more because not all are listed). A website catering specifically to Indian expatriates www.littleindia.com.sg, known as "Your Indian Hub in Singapore", provides a list of religious places of worship and bodies catering to Hindus, Sikhs, Christians and Muslims.

Hinduism was the faith to which many of the NRIs I met belonged to, and as suggested in Rayaprol's work, it was primarily the mothers who enforced the religious faith. They demonstrated this in two ways. One is through adherence to a vegetarian diet. This was exemplified by three families. One family were strict vegetarians. The mother, Chandani, told me that cooking was a huge burden on her because she found it difficult to eat out in Singapore, noting that her family would

probably only eat out once a week at the most and the rest of the time, she cooks at home.

In another family, the mother, father and son, were vegetarian some times, depending on the religious calendar, while the paternal grandparents, who lived together with the family, were strict vegetarians. On a day when the father bought me a meal because he was happy that he had won his cricket match, the mother made their son eat vegetarian food because they had to go to the temple afterward for a special festival. The mother, Anita, attributed her good fortune of finding fifty cents in the ladies bathroom to the fact that she was vegetarian for that day.

In the third family, the mother was strictly vegetarian whereas the rest of the family ate non-vegetarian foods some of the time. In an interview, I and the couple briefly discussed the food restrictions in their household.

- Rupali: I am vegetarian.
- Mohan: Normal times, it's vegetarian. She's a vegetarian. I'm not a vegetarian. In India, when you say "I'm a non-veg", doesn't mean you eat meat everyday. Some days, as a special dish for the vegetables and then there's a meat dish... part of a bigger meal. We hardly ever cook non-veg at home except when somebody is coming.
- Yan: So do you guys find it hard to eat out?
- Rupali: I do. I can't go to the Chinese hawker centres because of the smell and the...
- Yan: So you have to go to Little India...
- Rupali: Either Indian or Italian or Mexican. Actually, there's so much...
- Mohan: Eating out is not a problem in Singapore. Most of the places, it's hard. Thailand or Korea or Philippines.
- Rupali: Actually in Singapore, it's not hard at all. Very easy.

Although Mohan and Rupali did not make reference to their religious beliefs, it is clear that their food adherences are driven by Hinduism. This was similar in all three families.

I saw further examples of Hinduism in relation to food on two separate incidents. These pertained to *prasad*, which is ritual food that is made as offerings to deities and later distributed among devotees at temples. On the first occasion, a mother, Pratibha, had returned from a temple to the Singapore Cricket Association to pick up her children. She had obtained some *prasad* and offered some to Dayiti, her daughter. Dayiti declined to eat any, and her friend Neha standing next to her rebuked her, saying “How can you decline *prasad*?” Neha took some and gratefully ate a portion.

The other incident involving *prasad* took place during the Stumped '05 – a junior boys' cricket tournament. A mother had come from a temple to watch her son play. During the lunch break, I sat behind them and overheard the mother offer her son *mee goreng*¹⁴ from a temple. She sat him down and fed him. When he did not finish the portion of food, more eager to get back onto the cricket pitch, the mother expressed slight frustration.

Overlaps between food and religion were evident amongst the Hindu Indians. In the next section, I will discuss how the meaning of the Hindu concept of food pollution, *juthaa*, has changed from being religious to becoming non-religious and signifying Indianness in general, as shown in Aisha Khan's (1994) work on Indian migrants to Trinidad.

Food

Food is commonly used by migrants to do diaspora because it is viewed as “a kind of marker of cultural identity” (Khan 1994: 262-263). We classify cultures and ethnicities by food (i.e. Chinese, Indian, Mexican, Japanese, etc.). According to Khare and Rao (1986), “food serves as a key linkage between material and ideological dimensions of society”. Thus, it “mediates body and mind, work and thought, and individual person and society” (*ibid*: 6). For Indians, food is crucial because it “occupies a central place in Hindu thought, where it acts as a metaphor for the Hindu world view” (Lindenbaum 1986: 253, cited in Khan 1994: 250). For Hindus, ideas of purity and pollution (*juthaa*) which reflect social stratification are applied to food

¹⁴ Mee goreng is a Malay dish that can be likened to fried noodles.

preparation and consumption. In India, pollution rules worked against homogeneity amongst Indians. However, when Indians migrated to Trinidad, these rules were relaxed in order to accommodate a less fixed and rigid social stratification to allow for a negotiation between egalitarian and hierarchical forces. Over time, the concept of juthaa lost its salience as a religious precept and, by taking it out of its original context, it was made non-religious and it came to be related to Indian food and culture because the use of an Indian word fostered an encompassing Indian identity (Khan 1994). Thus, the cultural and individual meanings of juthaa changed under new circumstances.

The concept of juthaa links religion and food. This link is characteristic of Indians because their food consumption and religious beliefs are intricately entwined as demonstrated in my first hand observations of NRIs in Singapore. However, focus on the religious aspect of food is not always the emphasis in Indian diaspora. In Krishnendu Ray's (2004) study of Bengali-American households for example, he focuses on the production of Bengaliness through the production and consumption of Bengali food in the home. This task lay primarily in the hands of the mothers. In these households, he found that the focus was on the communal dinner which was a time to reinvent tradition, to create a "traditional" family huddle. Food was thus an arena in which to grapple with modern issues of home and away, along with progress and tradition.

"[N]ot only does the ingestion of food ensure that the eater assimilates its culturally ascribed properties, but, at the same time, the absorption of that food serves to integrate the eater within a particular cuisine and culture" (Harbottle 2000: 123-124). Thus, in an effort to retain their diasporic identity, it is crucial for children to become accustomed to and even like eating their 'ethnic' food. This was shown in the case of Indian-American youth in Pittsburgh saying that they love Indian food. Children's food choices are moulded by socio-cultural factors. And although parents play a huge role in determining what children eat when they are young, their exposure to other kinds of food inevitably increases their choice and activates their agency to choose as they grow older. The Iranian youth that Harbottle studied demonstrated a 'pick 'n mix' culture, choosing foods that suited their circumstances (Harbottle 2000). For the NRIs that I came into contact with in my fieldwork, there was a range of food choices

amongst the parents and the children. As described previously, some families predominantly ate Indian food. Others ate a mixture. For example, in the case of the Acharya family, their traditional Saturday breakfast at the Singapore Cricket Association is always bought from the McDonald's across the road. When they go to the Ceylon Sports Club however, they eat traditional Indian fare. For their son, Pramod, a few of his favourite foods are chicken burgers, samosas, and ice-cream. When told to eat vegetarian food by his mother, he grumbles, eventually acceding to her instruction.

Language

Language acts as a binding force for migrants in establishing joint activities, collective forms and reinforcing their ethnic identity (Baumann 2004: 171). The participants in my study all spoke various Indian languages. The major ones were Hindi followed by Tamil and Sindhi. One thing I noticed was that the adults tended to make friends with people who spoke the similar Indian language. Rupali and Mohan Kapoor for example, said that amongst their friends, they speak Hindi.

The language choice of the children differed from their parents. By and large, when interacting with their peers, the boys and girls alike chose to speak in English. The boys who had lived in Singapore for an extended period of time even spoke Singlish¹⁵. Their parents did not like this. Mohan described Singlish as being English without grammar. In a conversation with an NRI mother, my own mother was complimented for speaking good English; a reflection of the poor command of English among the general Singaporean populace (Chinese, Malay and Indian alike) that this woman had interacted with. When parents spoke to their children in an Indian language, the latter would often reply in English. And finally, during coaching sessions with the girls, the coach, Dharma, would sometimes break into Hindi and the girls would reply in the same tongue.

¹⁵ Singlish, a portmanteau of the words Singaporean and English, is the English-based creole spoken colloquially in Singapore (Wikipedia).

Clothing

Traditional ethnic clothing was only worn by some mothers. Most who did wear traditional garb wore *salwar kameez*¹⁶. This visually reinforced their status as reproducers of Indian tradition. I saw neither men nor children don traditional garb. By wearing ethnic clothing, the women not only signal to themselves their cultural identity, but they also signal to the public a point of differentiation.



[Figure 1.1] Mothers (extreme left and right) in salwar kameez (source: author)

Dance and Music

Amongst my informants, I came across only one girl who was involved for a period of time in Indian classical dance. Mohini did it as part of a school activity for a number of years and thoroughly enjoyed herself. I am uncertain of whether Mohini's parents encouraged her to take part in Indian dance or whether she took part in the activity entirely on her own accord. There are two forms that Indian dance takes. The first is the traditional classical form. Kalpana Ram's (2000) study found that this was one way through which middle-class Indian diasporas in Australia transmitted their cultural past to their children (particularly girls).

¹⁶ *Salwar kameez* is a traditional outfit often worn by Indians. *Salwar* are loose trousers and the *kameez* is a long shirt. There are male and female versions of the suit. It is sometimes called a *Punjabi suit*.

Ram suggests that the reason for turning to classical dance is because it is a project that “entails Indian nationalism’s forging of corporeal links between a certain vision of upper-caste, middle-class femininity, and its own spiritual core” (2000: 264, referencing ideas of Sangari and Vaid 1990; Bagchi: 1996). Thus, classical dance is understood as a transmitter of the most representative and prestigious aspects of Indian civilisation. Further more, dance, when understood as a performance, is an active site for the construction of two ideals – nationalism and gender hierarchies (Ram 2000: 265). This explains the desire for the parents in Rayaprol’s study to send their daughters to classical dance classes in the temple.



[Figure 2.2] Classical Indian dance (source: www.natya.com)

The second kind of dance is a stark contrast to the first. While the first is more commonly enforced by first generation migrants, the second kind, known as *desi* parties is a domain of the young Indians and serves very different purposes. To understand this phenomenon, I refer to Gregory Diethrich’s (1999) paper entitled “Desi Music Vibes: The Performance of Indian Youth Culture in Chicago”.

For diaspora communities, music is crucial for creating diasporic cultural identity because, according to Stokes, “music does not then simply provide a marker in a prestructured social space, but the means by which this space can be transformed” (Stokes 1994: 4, cited in Diethrich 1999: 35). Not only does music serve to unify, but it also serves as a platform on which people can experiment and establish their identity. Diethrich’s article argues that the genre of *desi* music creates, mediates and

sustains the diasporic identity of Indian youth, most of whom are born in America. *Desi* music, which originates from Britain, includes two genres. One is *bhangra-beat* and the other is Hindi remixes. The latter is basically a combination of Bollywood film songs with hip-hop and house beats. This youth-owned music represents their hybrid hyphenated identities of the West and Indian origins (Diethrich 1999: 46).

Far from assimilating into the dominant Western culture, Diethrich argues that through *desi* music, Indian youth are actually reaffirming their Indian identity and maintaining ties to India through the music that is played at dance parties. In addition to the music, an attraction of dance parties is that they provide a venue for young Indians to socialise with other Indians of the opposite gender. Diethrich writes that the tendency for Indian-Americans to intermarry is still very strong (1999: 48), something their parents are undoubtedly happy with. The other function of the dance parties is to provide an integrative venue for Indians of varying ethnic, regional and religious backgrounds, in effect, homogenising the youth, giving them a sense of solidarity. Indian dance parties of this sort are present in Singapore. Unfortunately however, I did not have the opportunity to experience such an occasion.

Organisations

Belonging to a social/political/business organisation based on one's ethnicity is common practice. Again referring to the website www.littleindia.com.sg, I could see a huge range of such organisations. There were six listed businesses associations and forty listed social clubs. Belonging to such organisations gives Indians a chance to meet other Indians with similar interests. For the NRIs that I encountered, the two primary social organisations they belonged to were the Singapore Indian Association (IA) and the Ceylon Sports Club (CSC). Although their reason for belonging to them were primarily to take advantage of their cricket facilities (i.e. grounds, wide screen television to watch matches), they inevitably got involved in other aspects and activities in the organisations.

Indian material consumption

Little India in the Serangoon suburb is as close to the ‘authentic’ Indian experience as one can get in Singapore. This area is akin to Jackson Heights in New York and Southall in London, which also act as “conceptual site[s] for Indianness” through the eating, buying, and selling of Indian goods (Shukla 2003: 83).

Purnima Mankekar (2005) described in her piece on “India shopping” in Indian grocery stores in America that the hallmarks of sensory stimuli (sights, sounds and smells) are similar to that of India (as I recalled from my time in Delhi). Little India is not a place for the faint of heart nor for claustrophobic individuals. One is immediately transported out of Singapore into an alternate place where South Asians are in the majority. Transient South Asian workers gather during the weekends, huddled in groups occupying empty grass patches, catching up with the latest happenings and news from home. I stuck close to my mother who tightly gripped her handbag as we made our way to the Mustafa shopping complex, a 24-hour shopping centre that sells anything and everything Indian. This is an institution in itself. This place is frequented by all Indians, including the NRIs and Indian tourists who visit the place by the bus loads because it is such a significant urban landmark. Here, Indians can obtain ‘ethnic Indian’ products that are unavailable else where. And for me, after an ‘authentic’ Northern Indian meal in the restaurant next door, I walk into Mustafa, the one place I know for sure that would sell a cricket bat. Upon my enquiry after a bat, the sales man looks at me quizzically and asks “You like cricket?” Too strange perhaps, that a non-Indian would be asking for such an ‘ethnic Indian’ product.



[Figure 2.3] Little India (left) and Mustafa centre (right)
(source: www.economist.com and www.world66.com)

Technology and Media

A key way in which the Indian diaspora stay connected with their ‘homeland’ is through technological advances and media. I will highlight three key examples – the internet, cable/satellite television, and Bollywood.

The use of the internet was prevalent amongst the NRIs in Singapore, but their usage (that I know of) mainly pertained to cricket. For example, for games that are not shown on television, they could either watch them online or get regular updates of the scores. There are also cricket computer games that one can obtain and play on the internet. For the girls’ coach, Dharma, the internet was his means of showing off how famous a cricket he was. He told me that he has many fan sites on the web. I did a quick Google search and found that there were many information sites about his cricket career in India.

The internet facilitates what Ananda Mitra (2000) calls “computer-mediated communication” (CMC). It creates virtual communities, which effectively shrink the world through the ability to transmit information instantaneously. This effectively results in the creation of “new images of community and nation” (Mitra 2000: 678). Mitra’s study looked at the posting of messages on electronic bulletin boards pertaining to India primarily by diasporic Indians based in the West. He notes that this was their attempt to “negotiate their dual identity as an immigrant and as a member of a place of origin” (*ibid*: 681). By entering a dialogue about India and matters pertaining to the nation, participants talked their Indianness into being. The discussions centred on India acted as the glue which held this online Indian community together.

“Have you seen Apala on Zee TV?” This question was directed at Dharma by Sonia. Apparently, whilst in India, Apala auditioned to be on a television program and although she did not make it, she did manage to get a few seconds of air time in the trailer of the program. In addition to the Cricket Channel 95 on Starhub cable, Zee TV is an Indian satellite channel that most, if not all the Indian households subscribed to. This was one of the ways NRIs kept up to date with the latest happenings in India.

Television is a powerful communicative tool and programs also become topics of discussion as illustrated by the question at the start of the paragraph.

Finally, the issue of Bollywood films. I knew all along that statistically Bollywood produces more films per year than Hollywood and that film had a particular appeal to Indians. However, its importance was highlighted further during my research in a number of incidents. I enjoy watching Bollywood movies myself. In fact, early on during my research, I made it a point to watch *Lagaan*, a fictional movie that depicts a group of Indians defeating the colonialists at their own game of cricket. The comical antics of the movie caused me to bend double with laughter all three times I watched it.

Suffering from a bit of Bollywood star fever, I found myself chasing a film crew that came to Singapore to film *Krrish*. I went to the extent of dragging my parents along to the zoo to catch a glimpse of the filming taking place. Following this, I accidentally stumbled upon the crew again in a different location. I sent a mobile phone text message to one of the mothers, Anita, whom I had gotten to know well, to inform her, because she was a fan of the actor, Hrithik Roshan. She replied back to ask exactly where I was. She did so to be able to give directions for her husband Sandeep to find the place. Taking time off work, he arrived at the location and busied himself taking photographs with the camera function on his cell phone as best as he could. And when he got home (this happened to be the day on which Anita had invited me over to their home to watch the movie *Munnabhai M.B.B.S.*), he showed us the photographs that he had taken. On the follow Saturday, when I was discussing what had happened with Anita, a couple of the girls overheard our conversation and joined in enthusiastically, querying me about Hrithik and the filming process.

There is a fair amount of academic literature that analyses the link between diasporic Indians and media. Karim (2003) wrote that communication media or “diasporic ‘mediascapes’” (Appadurai 1996, cited in Karim 2003: 1) in its various forms (film, satellite television, internet chat groups, websites, phone, fax, etc.) are important in the development and maintenance of diasporic communities. For Indians, the Bollywood phenomenon is particularly central. Mishra (2002) specifically addresses the issue of Bollywood cinema and Indian diaspora. He argues that for the new,

largely upwardly mobile migrants, the market of popular cinema is important because it serves as a site for the production of a space of new diaspora, a space of wealth and luxury that is desired and one that cinema endorses (2002: 236). For the Indian diaspora, Bollywood cinema brings the ‘homeland’ to the foreign location and acts to create a culture of imaginary solidarity across heterogeneous boundaries of class, caste, language, regional differences, etc. Lastly, the consumption of Bollywood films creates the notion of shared cultural idioms amongst the Indian diaspora.



[Figure 2.4] Promotional posters for movies *Lagaan*, *Krrish* and *Munnaabhai M.B.B.S.*

(source: www.en.wikipedia.org)

Though NRIs in Singapore produce and reproduce their diasporic Indian identity in numerous ways, for my specific group of professional, first generation NRI families, the most prominent way for them to do Indianness was through their varied involvement in the sport of cricket.

Sport and anthropology

[Sport is] a cultural universal having the following features: a human activity that is a formal and rule-directed contest ranging from a game-like activity to a highly institutionalized structure; competition between individuals or teams or can result in internal competition within an individual; a basis in physical skills, and strategy, chance or a combination of all three; and potential tangible rewards for the participants, monetary, material, or status (Sands 1999: 3).

Sport an important social arena. Anthropologist Catherine Palmer wrote that sport is “a key constituent of social life” because it is “a cultural phenomenon that evokes

passion, drives economies, shapes politics, highlights inequalities and underscores national, regional and ethnic identities” (2002: 253). Various aspects of culture play out in sport and such activities can thus shed light on issues of ethnicity, race, identity, ritual, and cultural change. Why then has sport “hovered on the margins” of anthropology? Prior to the 1990s, sport was used as a site for understanding other areas of culture, it was not something that was studied in and of itself. Anthropologists then did studies on sporting phenomenon in non-western cultures. Such examples include Trobriand cricket practices (Kildea and Leach 1975¹⁷) and Clifford Geertz’s (1972) study of Balinese cockfighting. Realising the cultural richness of sport, their attention has since turned to sport in Western cultural contexts. Examples Palmer cited of studies done on sport include bodybuilding (Klein 1993), aerobics (Markula 1995), cycling (Palmer 1996), American college football (Foley 1990, Sands 1999) and college track athletics (Sands 1995). Amongst the many themes that emerged through these studies, a couple key ones were: the cultural meanings that are made and articulated through sport, and the dialectic relationship between society and sport. Palmer highlights that the two most prominent concerns were masculinity and nationalism. There exists a lot of literature on the latter, including studies pertaining to diasporic peoples. Examples include the World Cup and Iranian exiles (Sanadjian 2002), Croatians and soccer (Hay 1998), British Pakistanis and cricket (Werbner 1996), and Indians in Australia and World Series Cricket (Madan 2000). In all these case, sport functioned as a point of connection between diasporic peoples, from which they could mobilize nationalist sentiment.

MacClancy highlights the multitude of functions that sport holds:

[It can] define more sharply the already established boundaries of moral and political communities; ... assist in the creation of new social identities; ... give physical expression to certain social values and ... act as a means of reflecting on those values; ... serve as potentially contested spaces by opposed groups (1996: 7).

The sport of cricket is the central focus of this thesis. It shall be demonstrated that the (re)production of Indianness takes place amongst NRI families in Singapore through their sport of choice - cricket.

¹⁷ Video by Gary Kildea and Jerry Leach (1975) *Trobriand cricket*.

Sport, parenting, children and agency

Within the sport literature, a subfield on children and sport has emerged. The study of childhood within anthropology is an area that has also only developed recently. Lawrence A. Hirschfeld (2002) examined the reasons for this in an article entitled, “Why don’t anthropologists like children?” He suggested two reasons.

[One] an impoverished view of culture of learning that overestimates the role adults play and underestimates the contribution that children make to cultural reproduction, and two, a lack of appreciation of the scope and force of children’s culture, particularly in shaping adult culture (2002: 611).

Adults, in the words of Bourdieu, attempt to inculcate their habitus in their children to enable continuity in reproduction (2001). However, children do possess agency which can determine the choices they make in adopting what they deem appropriate, especially in new fields, thereby potentially changing and shaping their parents’ culture. This is demonstrated in my analysis of the children which shows that inculcating Indianness is not simply reproduction, but rather, (re)production of a hybrid Indian identity. The studies done by Gary A. Fine (1987) and Noel Dyck (1995; 2000; 2000; 2003) in relation to sport, demonstrate the agency of children and the impact this has on their parents.

Gary A. Fine (1987) did extensive fieldwork on Little League Baseball in America. His study was about how boys learn to play, work and generally be “men” through organized sport as well as in informal activities surrounding sport. Although the League was largely adult-directed and seen as “a distinctly moral endeavour, training boys to be upstanding citizens” (1987: 2), the boys still had power to “shape the world of their choosing” (*ibid*). Their power was exemplified in a few ways – prioritizing friendships over kin ties, negotiating rules in informal games, performing on the field as an act (a public display rather than play), reinforcing group boundaries and displays of hierarchy and arrogance amongst the boys. Fine demonstrates that the boys shaped the field created by adults. As such, this study is useful for contextualizing, comparing and thinking about the involvement of the NRI boys and girls in cricket training.

Noel Dyck (2003, 2000a, 2000b, 1995) has done extensive research on the involvement of both children and parents in sports like athletics in Canada. He argues that parenting is a concerted effort amongst middle class parents. The primary goal of middle class parents is to either reproduce their parents' class status or further it. One area they invest in is sport because they believe that "sport is good for kids" in the sense that it equips their off-spring to be both "successful" children as well as adults through the sport capitals accrued (2003: 58). In addition to sport benefiting the children in terms of character building and satisfying their need for play in a safe environment, Dyck highlights the benefits for the parents. Through their children's sport, involved parents develop consociate relationships which satisfy their needs for social interaction. Children's sport is an arena for parents to meet other like-minded people and to display their commitment to child rearing and demonstrate that they are good parents (1995: 226). Dyck's work is useful for analyzing the involvement of the Indian parents, particularly the mothers, in cricket. It is also exemplary of the use of sport for the establishment of Bourdieu's (1978) notion of capital. Bourdieu sees capital as an essential form of power with which agents and groups possess the ability to change and control situations (Tomlinson 2004: 168). Examples of capitals include – economic, cultural, educational, social, and symbolic capital. Economic capital refers to wealth, income and money. Cultural capital refers to the consumption of cultural goods and the expression of taste. Educational capital refers to educational qualifications. Social capital refers to resources that are generated through relationships. Lastly, symbolic capital refers to an agent's reputation and image. Of all the capitals, Bourdieu argues that economic and cultural are the two most important forms of capital (Wacquant 1989: x). All of these capitals are sought after by NRIs and cricket is a means of attaining them.

Dyck's portrayal of the raising of middle class Canadian children through sport is similar to practices carried out in families in America. Annette Lareau's (2003) study showed that middle class parents see themselves as "developing" their children, cultivating their talents in a concerted fashion through highly organized activities (i.e. sport). Lareau deemed this "concerted cultivation". The families she studied placed enormous emphasis on gaining the right kind of capital (i.e. cultural) to advance in American society. Thus, their children lived extremely structured and hectic lives as they were chauffeured from one activity to another, each with the intent of

“deliberately stimulating” their children’s development and fostering their cognitive and social skills (2003: 5). The middle class Indians in Singapore may not push their children as hard as the American families in Lareau’s research but similarities can be drawn and I will borrow her term “concerted cultivation” when talking about the Indian parents’ desire to produce a certain kind of child. Mothers and fathers cultivate their children in different ways. In cricket, the former plays a facilitating role while the latter sparks the interest and continually fuels it.

Mothers

In these studies, more often than not, the facilitator of ‘concerted cultivation’ is the mother. The explanation provided in these studies is that it is a consequence of the husband being the major bread winner and the woman’s prime responsibility is of child care and housekeeping (Hall 1976: 192, cited in Thompson 1999: 2). As a result, activities involving the children, including sport, are assumed by a mother so as to demonstrate being a ‘good mother’. Shona Thompson (1992), in her study on ‘tennis mothers’ in Perth, argues that the invisible labour of the mothers help to maintain and reproduce the institution of sport. I will extend her observations to argue that their identities as ‘good mothers’ is also established through this work of ‘concerted cultivation’. Some of their tasks may seem mundane, like doing the laundry, chauffeuring children to and from practices and competitions, and preparing meals, but all these things facilitate the tennis scene. There are parallels that can be drawn to my own research on the labour of the Indian mothers for their children and husbands’ cricket. Fundamentally, all the Indian mothers supported their children and husbands’ cricketing endeavours, albeit to different degrees. Indian mothers are also more involved than Indian fathers in the practicalities of their children’s cricket and in one case, a particular mother went to the extent of organizing tournaments specifically to enable her son to take part in competitions. I call this ‘pro-active’ support. I have chosen to classify the mothers’ support into three forms as a means to highlight that support varies in both kind and intensity. The other two classifications of mothers’ support I have called ‘quiet support’ and ‘active support’.

The role of mothers as housewives is critical to successful projects of diaspora. The reason for this, as argued by Kurotani (2005) in her ethnography on Japanese corporate wives in the United States, is the importance of female domesticity in diaspora. In a similar vein to Rayaprol (1997, 2001), Kurotani sees women as the prime cultural reproducers.

Women-as-housewives become the conservative agents of state and global power not only for the reproduction of labor, but also for the construction of cultural and national identities and their middle-class femininity is produced and reinforced by their reproductive labor (see Chodorow 1989; Sacks 1975; Sanday 1990) (2005: 16).

She found that transnationalism brought to the surface the consideration of the roles of mothers and what it meant to be a 'successful' child (Kurotani 2005: 185), and that the construction of the mother's identity was dependent on her children. As such, there was an increased focus on creating an environment at home that was conducive to the nurturing and development of the children in the foreign setting. Drawing on work by Allison (2000) on mothering in Japan, Kurotani established motherhood as a metaphor signifying dominance in a relationship of dependency achieved through the act of caretaking and indulgence by nurturing close bonds through playing the motherly role (2005: 135). It is this phenomenon that acted as "the constructive force that connected women to the larger world outside of their home and that motivated their actions toward change" (Kurotani 2005: 186). For the cricket mothers, the connection with other NRIs, particularly other mothers, through their children's sport was vital as it created a wealth of benefits for them. Mothers then, have a two-fold reason for supporting their husband and children's hobby; one pertains to their responsibility as mothers and the other is that it acts as an avenue into the world outside the home.

Fathers

Fathers are involved in cricket differently to mothers. The most obvious difference is that they play the sport themselves, either socially or competitively. The other dissimilarity to the mother was that the fathers all told cricket stories. Functioning as 'diasporic language', these stories are vital to the inculcation of cricket and hence

Indianness in the Indian migrants. As writer R. K. Narayan put it, "... next to rice and water, stories are the most demanded stuff in daily life... every moment someone or other is always asking for a story" (1988: 69).

Stories are things about events that took place in a particular time and space and are "narrated from a particular perspective or standpoint" (Goffman 1974). According to Riessman, stories are told for a reason and have a point to make (1993: 20). Stories are means through which people construct their identities by narrating themselves into being. They also work to strengthen collective identity through the imposition of norms of behaviour and appropriate attitudes (Davis 2002: 25). For the diasporas, stories act crucially in the establishment of cultural continuity because they are acts of bringing the past into the present. Shukla (2001), on the importance of stories for South Asian diaspora, wrote:

Situated within a range of imagined and real nations, South Asian diasporas embody a set of disconnections between place, culture, and identity (Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Just as life expectations, imaginative inclinations, and psychic investments lie outside observed geographic boundaries, they are expressed through word and text in a variety of forms. Imaginaries, in social life or fictional narrative, are a central fact of diasporas through time... (2001: 552)

Whilst interviewing the fathers, I heard numerous tales of their childhood cricket antics and what struck me was their similarity. Accounts of broken windows for example were common. The other commonality was their description of how picking up cricket was the 'natural' (Indian) thing to do. The stories told by the fathers are particularly crucial because their imaginaries shape the lives of their respective families. In all the families I met, I found that the interest in the sport stemmed from the fathers' zeal which stimulated the passion in the rest of the family members. So while mothers saw to the practical aspects of the game, fathers were the ideological spearheads. There was a clear correlation between how passionate a father was for the game and the interest level of the rest of the family. Cricket is an aspect of the past that the fathers bring into the present and, they hope, the future of their families in order to retain their Indianness.

Reproducing Indianness elite-style

NRIs belong to the class of elite diaspora. Unlike the ‘old’ Indian diaspora (Mishra 1996 cited in Diethrich 1999: 36) who focused on things like religion, language, food, clothing, Indian material consumption, dance and music, to reproduce Indianness, as demonstrated by first generation migrants to The United States (Rayaprol 1997), such ways of doing diaspora are becoming increasingly replaced with other forms. Rather than possessing a rigid, fixed culture, the current regime most favoured is one Ong (2002) terms ‘flexible citizenship’. This concept means localizing strategies, through familial and economic practices, seeking to evade, deflecting and taking advantage of political and economic conditions all over the world (2002: 174). ‘Flexible citizenship’ is the result of gaining flexible transnational capital through “familial strategies of regulation” by mobilizing immediate family and relatives in a common interest (Ong 2002: 177). Cricket is the transnational capital of choice for elite NRI families as the site for the (re)production of Indianness. Unlike the other ways of doing diaspora, cricket is a contemporary, transportable, and cross-culturally relevant, more so than traditional forms of cultural practices. Simultaneously Indian and non-Indian, knowledge of the sport is of use in a number of places (primarily the Commonwealth) across the globe. This is also the case in Singapore. Widely viewed as an Indian as well as an elite sport, due to the sport’s development in England, India and Singapore (more about this in chapter three), NRIs dominate the cricket arena over other ethnic groups because they claim to possess cricketing capital ‘naturally’ as something that is “in their blood”. Hence the reproduction of Indianness and eliteness, occurs through the concerted exertion of their Indian cricket capital in the Singapore context.

In chapter three, I give an account of the inter-connected developments of cricket so as to contextualise the notion of cricket as flexible Indian capital.

Background

History and contextualization

Introduction

In *Sport and social class* (1978), Bourdieu argued that to understand sport, we have to look into the historical events leading to its development and current status. Crucial questions he asked include, “How is the demand for ‘sport products’ produced, how do people acquire the ‘taste’ for sport, and, for one sport rather than another, and whether as an activity or as a spectacle?” Bourdieu argues that one cannot understand the development of one sport without attention to the field of sport. He places emphasis on distinction and different class associations relating to their ‘taste’ for different sports, which a tracing of history can illuminate. The following quote highlights Bourdieu’s emphasis on history:

One cannot understand what sporting phenomenon are at a given moment in a given social environment by relating them directly to the economic and social conditions of the corresponding societies: the history of sport is a relatively autonomous history which, even when marked by the major events of economic and social history, has its own tempo, its own evolutionary laws, its own crises, in short, its sport chronology (1978: 821)

Each sport has its own “relatively autonomous history”. Cricket is no exception. In this chapter, I outline the historical and social conditions that make cricket the social phenomenon it is today, in India and in Singapore. I address the questions that Bourdieu posed in order to understand why the elite diasporic NRI refer to cricket as opposed to religion, food, language, etc. as a means of negotiating, constructing, and presenting Indianness in their new homeland.

Indian evolution of a ‘gentleman’s game’

Cricket was and to a large extent, still is the epitome of ‘Englishness’ (Guha 2002). Arguably the oldest ‘modern’ sport, it has long been played in England and its British colonies. In the colonies, the game had two primary uses; the first was as a British pastime for British expatriates and colonialists, and the second was to civilise the locals. Cricket was viewed as a civilizing tool because it “embodied the self-image of the Victorian elite” and the English believed that it had the ability to “set moral standards for the rest of humanity” (Guha 2002: xi). It was a game unlike other English games such as rugby or football because it did not involve physical contact and brutality. Hence it was used as a marker of distinction by Victorian elite. Furthermore, the economic and cultural capital requirements of the sport such as time, money, club membership, class distinctions regarding the professionals (often bowlers) and the elite amateurs, and the lack of rough play established the game as an elitist English sport and an exclusive ‘gentleman’s game’.

When cricket was first introduced in India, it was not done with the intent of popularizing the game amongst the locals. It was purely a source of entertainment for British soldiers and sailors. According to the cricket historian Boria Majumdar, cricket was first introduced to the Parsis in the mid 19th century by a British school teacher by the name of Boswell (2003: 164). He saw it as a good means to civilize his unruly elite Indian students. The Parsis were “a wealthy entrepreneurial group who acted as cultural brokers between British and Indian society” (Bose 1990: 32, cited in Kaufman and Patterson 2005: 102). They took to anything British to demonstrate their desire for collaboration and thus gain distinction from other groups like the Hindu elite and Muslim population. Thus, the Parsis taking to cricket was “no accident” (Cashman 1979: 190-191).

Evidence of Parsi success at cricket spurred on other communities like the Hindu elite and Muslim population. Ethno-religious rivalry was a major reason for the initial interest in the sport in India. The other reason was to beat the colonizers at their own game, a sign of the seeds of nationalism. Cricket in India was characterised by a “kind of segregated integration” (Kaufman and Patterson 2005: 102). Indian princes also participated in the sport to enhance their stature with the British, and to challenge

rival princes. In an effort to create winning teams, they included the best players. And during selection processes for these players, factors of class and caste were not deemed as being important. At this point in history, cricket was meritocratic; it gave players from underprivileged backgrounds a chance to emerge as stars and climb the social mobility ladder (Majumdar 2003: 170).

By the late 19th century, cricket was actively promoted by the British in India. The sport appeared in schools and *gymkhanas*¹⁸. Cricket playing Indians became a force to be reckoned with to a point where land in Bombay was allocated to the locals to be used exclusively for the sport. The division of the land along communal lines led to the establishment of the Bombay Pentangular tournament in 1892. This competition played a formative role in the development of cricket in India. The teams were divided along religious and cultural lines – Hindus, Parsis, Muslims, Europeans, and ‘the rest’. The tournament raised the standard of cricket. And as the stakes in the game grew higher, some teams went to the extent of hiring coaches from England to give them the added competitive advantage.

The 1920s marked a significant turning point in Indian cricket history. The idea of a united nation instead of one made up of separate communities was promoted by key figures like Mahatma Ghandi and Jawaharlal Nehru. As a result, the communally divided Bombay Pentangular became a target of anti-communalist sentiment, leading to its demise in 1946.

The next phase of development in Indian cricket which saw the emergence of the idea of a national game with a national representative team arose after independence. The loss of power and influence of the princes allowed companies to take over the sponsorship of cricket players and that effectively transformed the game into a preserve of the educated elite and relatively affluent (Majumdar 2003: 171). This was because corporate patrons only wanted to hire educated players so that the cricketers would not be liabilities to the companies after their retirement from playing competitively (*ibid*: 188). This resulted in a reduction of chances for underprivileged Indians to enter the game because centres of cricketing excellence, like schools and

¹⁸ Gymkhanas were clubs in pre-partition India that were established along communitarian lines.

clubs, all charged high fees which were out of the reach of the poor. Cricket thus became monopolized by the elite. Caste profiles¹⁹ of the national cricket team from the 1960s right up to the 1990s, demonstrate that teams were dominated by players who came from the upper classes and castes. Furthermore, by increasing the prices of tickets to cricket matches, the Board of Control for Cricket (BCCI), the arbiters of the sport, made entry into cricket grounds in the 1950s and 1960s, signals of social status.

Despite the monopolization of cricket by the elite, the presence of the sport had been strong throughout its history in India. Two key phenomena further triggered the sport's explosion. One was the winning of the Cricket World Cup by the de facto Indian National team in 1983. The other was the introduction of media coverage, primarily television. Media brought cricket out of the hands of the elite and turned it into a widely consumed form of 'public culture' (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995: 6). Cricket became a "profound basis for group identity", specifically Indian identity (*ibid*). The indigenization of cricket created the basis for collective Indian identity in terms of national sentiment, as well as a basis for individual identity. Appadurai sees cricket as a stage on which Indians can imagine the world, construct, and experience it. It is a stage on which many things can be performed; social groups, solidarities, distinctions, and oppositions (*ibid*: 15).

Appadurai suggests three reasons for why it is that cricket is India's national passion and embodiment of India. The first is that of the essence of 'play' in human life (Huizinga 1950, cited in Appadurai 1995: 44). For Indians (primarily males because it is males who dominate the cricketing arena), most of whom have had some kind of experience with cricket, watching the sport is a deeply engaging activity, as Bourdieu (1977) suggests, at the level of the bodily hexus. Therefore, there is bodily pleasure associated with playing or imagining playing cricket.

[T]hrough the convergence of state, media, and private sector interests, [cricket has] come to be identified with "India", with "Indian" skill, "Indian" guts, "Indian" team spirit, and "Indian" victories, the bodily pleasure that is at the core of the male viewing experience is simultaneously part of the erotics of nationhood (Appadurai 1995: 44).

¹⁹ Refer to Appendix A.

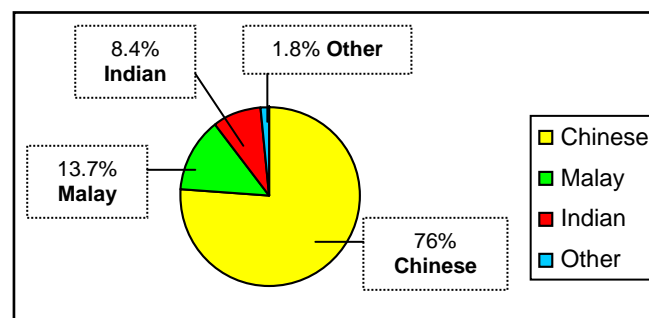
The second reason Appadurai argues for cricket being the national passion in India is because as an agnostic sport, it can recalibrate “the relationship between leisure and pleasure in modern industrial societies” (Elias and Dunning 1986; Hargreaves 1982, cited in Appadurai 1995: 44). In a nation where notions of community, class, ethnicity, language, etc., are contested, cricket gives people a valid stage to contest them on, giving them the “pleasure of agency” (Appadurai 1995: 45).

The third reason for cricket being a national passion is the ability of “organized sport in mobilizing simultaneously powerful sentiments both of nation and humanity” (MacAloon 1984; 1990, cited in Appadurai 1995: 44). Appadurai speculates that “cricket is the ideal focus for national attention and nationalist passion because it affords the experience of experimenting with what might be called the “means of modernity” for a wide variety of groups within Indian society” (1995: 45). Cricket can potentially be enjoyed by all Indians, regardless of class, caste, religion, education, etc. It is a levelling plane both nationally and internationally (a common bond amongst cricket lovers the world over – Indians and non-Indians). At the same time, cricket is glamorous, cosmopolitan, and demonstrates national competitiveness all at once. Cricket allows Indians to dream, in an arena where both consumers and producers of the sport can “share the excitement of Indianness without its many divisive scars” (*ibid*). Lastly, cricket gives all participant “groups and actors the sense of having hijacked the game from its English habitus into the colonies at the level of language, body, and agency as well as competition, finance and spectacle” and beating the former colonial power at her own game (*ibid*).

Through a look into the history of cricket in India, it is clear why the sport is often thought of as the nation’s layman’s religion. Social, political, and economic aspects factor into the sport, influencing its evolution, transforming it into a phenomenon that is uniquely location specific. Similarly, for the cricket scene in Singapore, various factors have contributed to its current status. To gain an insight, I will give a brief account of Singapore’s history.

Setting the scene

Singapore is an island city-state with a population of 4.35 million²⁰. It is a nation of diversity in terms of culture, race, language and religion. The country's diversity is a result of immigration since its founding in 1819 (Trocki 2006: 39). Singapore's current ethnic make up²¹ is – 76% Chinese, 13.7% Malay, 8.4% Indian²² and 1.8% other. The ethnic division of Singapore into four groups has given rise to what is known as the “CIMO” model of Singaporeans – “Chinese-Indian-Malay-Other” (Clammer 1998: 51).



[Figure 3.1] Chart showing Singapore's ethnic distribution in 2004

The CIMO model is reflected in various ways. For example, the government recognizes four official languages – English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. The government also celebrates the ethnic groups by according each one with public holidays. For example, the Chinese have Chinese New Year²³, the Malays have Hari Raya Haji²⁴, and the Indians have Deepavali²⁵. The existence of the enforced segregation between ethnic groups has its roots in the British occupation.

²⁰ Singapore Department of Statistics: June 2005. This figure was made up of residents (citizens and permanent residents) and non-residents.

²¹ Figures taken from *Singapore in Figures 2005*, a publication by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

²² The classification of Indian refers to any person resident in Singapore of South Asian ancestry. The most notable country is India. The ethnic group of Indians primarily consists of Tamils, of both Indian as well as Sri Lankan ancestry (Mulliner and The-Mulliner 1991: 71). Other Indians represented include Sikhs, Punjabis, Gujaratis, Bengalis and Parsis (Abraham 2000: 7).

²³ Chinese New Year is also known as Lunar New Year or Spring Festival. It is the most important traditional Chinese holiday.

²⁴ Hari Raya Haji otherwise known as Eid ul-Adha (in Arabic) is celebrated by Muslims worldwide. This is the holiday accorded to Malays because the majority of them are of the Muslim faith. This occasion commemorates the prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son (Ishmael) for (Allah).

²⁵ Deepavali is the Hindu 'Festival of Lights'. This is one of the most eagerly awaited festivals by Indians all over the world. It symbolizes the victory of good over evil, and lamps are lit as a sign of celebration and hope for mankind.



[Figure 3.2] Common portrayals of racial harmony in Singapore
(source: www.visitsingapore.com)

In 1819, Singapore was established as a British trading station by the British India Trading Company. This triggered the rapid growth and development of the island from a small fishing village. Many people flocked to Singapore in search of their fortune. Within five years, the population exceeded 10,000 (Trocki 2006: 44). Its rapid, unplanned growth caused many social problems. By the 1860s, the Singapore merchant community became so agitated by the British India's neglect of the local peoples' welfare that they called for Singapore to be established as a separate colony of Britain. Singapore became a Crown Colony in 1867 and was ruled by the British through military power.

World War I had little impact on Singapore. However, when World War II broke out, the island quickly fell into the hands of the Japanese. The four years of Japanese occupation, from 1942-1945, is widely regarded as the darkest period in Singapore's history. The return of the British troops in 1945 following the Japanese surrender to the Allied troops caused much fanfare. However, there was also a sentiment of anti-colonialism because Singaporeans had seen that the British were not infallible rulers. The post-war era saw a rise in nationalist sentiment and the British gradually increased the self-governance of Singapore. In 1959, Singapore attained fully self-governing status and its first head of state and prime minister were sworn in.

Despite the attainment of self-governance, the dominant political party, the People's Action Party (PAP), was not satisfied with the arrangement. They fought against British colonialism, pushing for independence from their colonial oppressors. As a

way out, they pushed for a merger with Malaysia. The merger took place in 1963, and ties between Singapore and the British were severed. The merger, however, proved to be short-lived due to irreconcilable differences between the Singapore and Malaysian governments. On August 9, 1965, the two nations separated and Singapore became an independent nation.

From its 'birth' as a nation, the Singapore government had many problems and issues to deal with, including high rates of unemployment, a shortage of housing, a lack of natural resources, no national defence, and a largely uneducated population. Thus, the focus of the government was on social and economic growth.

By the 1980s, when Singapore's economic growth had transformed the nation into an increasingly white-collar, middle class society, there was a shift from economic survival to an emphasis on quality of life (Tamney 1996: 18). In 1984, the government made public their determination for Singaporeans to lead more fulfilling lives. Leading fulfilling lives meant a number of things. One was a push for excellence in sport in the international arena.

Prior to the 1980s, striving for excellence in sport did not play a major part in the lives of Singaporeans. Priority was placed on the development of the nation's economy, relegating other issues to a back seat. Another reason was that the traditional Chinese view on sport dominated. That view saw sport as 'wasteful' because it was thought that there was no merit in play, only in work (Horton 2003: 251). A third reason was that sport was used as a tool by the government to create social cohesion amongst various ethnic communities. Thus the governmental goal of sport was pragmatic and focused on general fitness as opposed to winning competitions. By the 1990s, the government became more focused on sport as a means of fostering national pride. In a publication commemorating the Singapore Sports Council's 25th anniversary, the Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, wrote:

A fit people makes a rugged nation [*sic*]. Being fit is not just about muscles, speed and stamina. It is also about determination, discipline and dedication. These attributes make for mental toughness. They help us to overcome unexpected adversities like the present challenges posed by the regional economic crisis and political uncertainties.

Sports and physical fitness activities thus have a national dimension... The contribution of sports to nation building and national pride is far-reaching. When Singapore athletes win medals at international sports competitions, they bring immense pride and joy to our people. Sporting victories foster national joy and pride.

The endorsement of the government for the pursuit of sporting excellence saw the launch of Sports Excellence 2000 (SPEX 2000). Initiatives like this aimed to produce high-performance athletes, capable of competing in the international sport arena (Foo and Balachandrer 1998: 311). Some sports in which Singaporeans have achieved international recognition are swimming, badminton and soccer. These are among the top ten most popular sporting activities in Singapore²⁶. Along with these activities, the government was also pushing for excellence in all other sports, including the little known sport of cricket.

Cricket in Singapore

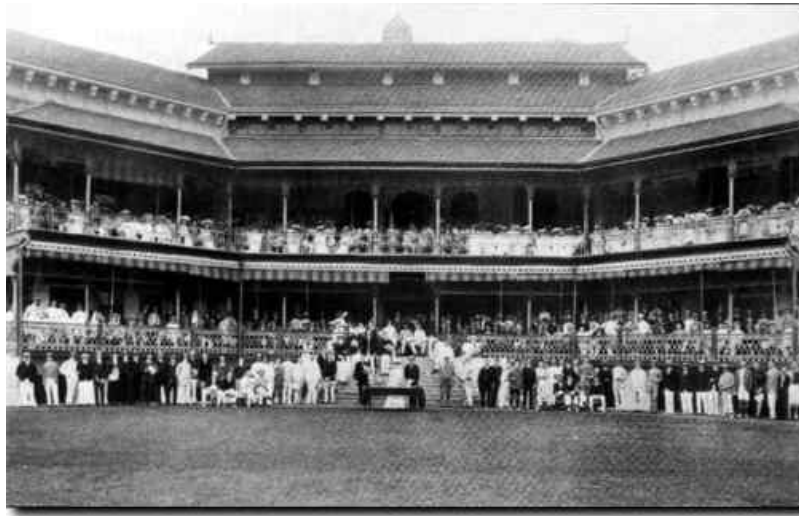
The playing of cricket in Singapore dates right back to the early 19th century when the game was introduced by the British. For the early British settlers, sport was seen as crucial for maintaining good physical and social health. The first recorded match took place in 1837 at The Padang²⁷ (Whitehorn 1998). Before the formation of local cricket clubs, matches were usually played with crews of visiting ships. Thus, cricket matches were not played regularly between the 1830s and early 1840s. The late 1840s saw a steady influx of British expatriates and that led to the establishment of the first cricket club in 1852 – the Singapore Cricket Club (SCC).

The founding of the SCC saw humble beginnings. It started with twenty-eight members. The founding members were men who were mostly British clerks or ‘junior assistants’, working in British businesses and the mercantile community. However, by 1880, the membership of the club had grown manifold to four hundred people. Membership of the SCC became a source of social distinction because it was seen as a

²⁶ Results from the *National Sports Participation Survey* conducted in 2001. Refer to Appendix B.

²⁷ The Padang is centrally located at the heart of the central-business district. The ground is nationally sanctioned due to its prime location and is used for events like the National Day Parade. It was previously known as the Padang Cricket Ground because it has been the home of the Singapore Cricket Club since 1852 (*SCC: Bowling a maiden over*).

feather in the social cap as more wealthy and influential people joined (www.scc.org.sg).



[Figure 3.3] Singapore Cricket Club

(source: www.britishempire.co.uk/maproom/malayacricketclub.htm: date unknown)

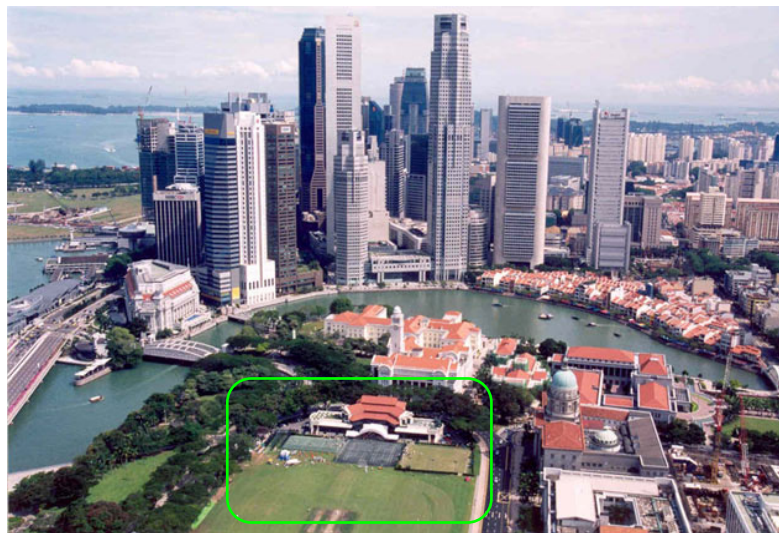
In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the popularity of cricket exploded. This transformation was credited to the success of tours like that of Lord Harris' M. C. C. side in 1883 (Whitehorn 1998). By the late 1880s, cricket became the most popular sport in Singapore. Masses of Chinese and Eurasians²⁸ flocked to watch cricket matches. As part of the British goal of 'civilizing' the natives, the adoption of European language, culture and practice was encouraged. Some Asians learned to play European sport like cricket. They also lived and acted like Europeans by adopting European styles of dress and food habits. The abandonment of traditional culture and values was scorned by some of their counterparts. However, while Asians sought to be more European-like, as the British wanted them to be, the British became increasingly hostile to their advances and erected barriers to prevent them from advancing further (Trocki 2006: 46-47).

The SCC undertook tours around the Asian region to places like China, Hong Kong, Batavia, Ceylon, Burma and Siam (Whitehorn 1998). By 1914, the membership of the SCC had reached 878 (www.scc.org.sg). However, World War One marked the decline of cricket in Singapore. The war saw many of Singapore's young cricketers

²⁸ The term Eurasian refers to people of mixed European and Asian descent.

take up arms and leave the country, most never returning. And those who remained in Singapore also found themselves in the battle zone. In 1915, in the midst of a match, a European man ran onto the field to tell the players that a mob of mutinying Indian soldiers were killing every European in sight. The game was promptly abandoned and the players went into hiding. This incident is known as the 'Mutiny of the Indian-Muslim 5th Light Infantry'. The mutiny was started by a rumour that this particular infantry was to be sent to Turkey to fight fellow Muslims. About thirty-five people were killed by the mutineers (Mulliner and The-Mulliner 1991: 70).

Following World War One, there was a brief revival of cricket due in part to the 1927 tour of Singapore and Malaya by an Australian team. The tour was such a big event in Singapore that a two-day public holiday was declared for the match (*Straits Times*, cited in Whitehorn 1998). However, this was the last time cricket was treated in such a spectacular fashion in Singaporean history. The Depression that followed the war saw many expatriates returning to their home lands. The SCC closed for the duration of World War Two and the only cricket games allowed were ones organised by Japanese occupiers, between Indians and Eurasians, in the hope of gaining their favour (*ibid*).



[Figure 3.4] Aerial photo of the SCC in the heart of the central business district
(source: www.scc.org.sg)

Cricket in post-independence Singapore took another turn. Firstly, the Singapore Government attempted to wrest the Padang ground from the SCC. That failed because

of overwhelming public opposition. Instead, the government forced all clubs in Singapore to maintain at least 50% Singaporean membership (www.scc.org.sg). This was done so that club memberships were no longer divided along the lines of communalism and a deliberate attempt to break traditional forms of distinction and exclusivity. This policy applied to the SCC and the demography of the club changed.

The nationalist government initiated a further change to the cricket scene. It denounced the sport as a tool of British imperialism (Whitehorn 1998), and the eventual removal of British troops from the island, accompanied by the government's focus on economic growth, led to the decline of sport participation, particularly in cricket.

In 1970, the Minister of Education concluded that cricket was taking up too much time of students and removed it from the list of approved inter-school ventures the following year²⁹. That meant that between the years of 1971 and 1991, cricket was almost non-existent in schools³⁰. When it was put back on the calendar in 1992, schools had to start developing the cricket scene almost from scratch.

Whilst cricket had been dormant in schools for twenty years, the general cricket scene in Singapore did still prevail, albeit only through the game played by a small number of people like expatriates. That was primarily due to the existence of clubs like the SCC, the Singapore Recreation Club (SRC) and the Singapore Cricket Association (SCA). The latter organisation was registered in 1948 and is currently the national controlling body of cricket in Singapore³¹.

Despite its international links with the ICC and the National team playing in interstate³² competitions, the SCA struggled to survive. It was only ten years ago that it established their permanent base in Kallang. Prior to that, the association's lack of a

²⁹ Information elicited from an interview with Mr Subra, the administrator of the Singapore Cricket Club.

³⁰ This was the case in government schools. Autonomous and independent schools which have a degree of flexibility in the running of their institutions may have chosen to carry on with cricket programmes.

³¹ The SCA became a member of the International Cricket Conference (ICC) in 1949 following the formation of the Singapore National Cricket team in the previous year.

³² Prior to independence from Malaysia.

home rendered it like a 'squatter'. Here is how Mr Subra, the administrator of the SCA, described the SCA's situation before the club got a 'home'.

[I]t's only been about ten years since we got this [Kallang] ground. Before that, we used to go like squatters every where, you know. One time you play at the SCC, another time you play at the Ceylon Sports Club or Indian Association. See the thing is that we have been receiving a lot of co-operation and good will from the clubs. Who first did, you know, also partly, they realize that unless the [Singapore] Cricket Association also moved up, then their chances of growth is also there. So they've been very co-operative, over the years.



[Figure 3.5] The Singapore Cricket Association Logo (source: www.cricket.org.sg)

The SCA did move up and grow, especially post 1990, after Goh Chok Tong pushed for excellence in sport. Currently, the association gets \$400,000 per annum from the Singapore Sports Council and some financial support from the Asian Cricket Council (ACC). This helped the expansion of cricket. The growth and popularity of cricket however, has not been as significant as other sports like swimming, badminton and table tennis³³. Despite this, and although far from the elite level of international competition, the SCA has great ambitions for the sport. Their vision is:

To achieve one day international status by 2010 and to compete at the highest level on the international stage supported by a domestic infrastructure of adult and schoolboy league cricket which is on par with the other countries playing international cricket. (www.cricket.org.sg)

In order to reach their goal, they have in place a three part mission statement.

³³ Results from the *National Sports Participation Survey* conducted in 2001 demonstrated that Singaporeans prefer individual sports because other preoccupations (i.e. work, schooling, family commitments, etc.) make it difficult to organise sports sessions with others. As a result, individual sports are more popular (2001: 15).

- To develop and promote the sport of cricket so as to raise the level of awareness, understanding and participating within Singapore.
- To create an infrastructure which is conducive to identifying and nurturing talented cricketers in order to compete and excel at the international level.
- To raise the standard of cricket in Singapore whilst instilling in our cricketers the games traditional values and ensuring that cricket is played in the true spirit of the game.



[Figure 3.6] SCA building and ground (source: author)

Currently, Singapore plays against countries in the region like Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand. An example of a regional competition is the Tuanku Ja'afar. A king of Malaysia started it and it is named after him. It involves the above countries mentioned. Each country takes it in turn to host a match.

The cricket movement is gaining momentum in Singapore. There are currently twenty cricket clubs listed under the SCA's directory. Mr Subra says that there are more, perhaps over thirty clubs throughout the nation. Approximately 5000 people play cricket in Singapore. It is necessary for clubs wanting to take part in the Singapore Cricket League to become affiliates of the SCA. The adult League which runs from February through to November is organized by the SCA. This year, a total of forty-six teams participated. In addition to the adult League, there is also an inter-school league. There are four divisions in this league. Division A is for under twenty-threes, division B is for under nineteens, division C is for under fifteens, and the last division is for under thirteens. Students at post-secondary educational institutions have their own league but it is not organized by the SCA. The former leagues are for men and boys. There is no women/girls' league but this is something that the SCA is working

towards. For girls who play cricket, the main event is a cricket carnival that the SCA organizes. This year, a total of nine girls' teams took part in the six-a-side competition. The SCA is hopeful about creating a women's team in the near future.



[Figure 3.7] SCA pitch (source: www.cricket.org.sg)

In addition to organizing both local and international leagues and tournaments, the SCA plays a big role in cricket training. It is the main source of cricket coaches in Singapore, employing six full-time accredited coaches. They conduct training sessions at the SCA and in various schools. Most of the coaches come from India where they themselves played competitively at national and international levels, and they continue to do so for the Singaporean teams. The rationale behind importing foreign talent is two-fold. Firstly, they have the skills and experience to be able to coach and nurture budding cricketers. Secondly, by playing cricket competitively for Singaporean teams, the standard of the sport in the country increases rapidly. It is hoped that when the national teams do well, the profile of cricket will rise, leading to the sport getting even more funding and attracting more players. In the mean time, the imported coaches/players fill the current gap in talent needed for grooming youngsters, most of whom are Indians, for the cricket future of the nation.

Cricket in Singapore dates back a long time and its history bears similarities to that of cricket in India. However, unlike in India, interest in the game was not sustained. Reasons for cricket's lack of popularity were manifold. They included its link to the incompetent colonial British rule, the Singaporean government's view of sport as

unimportant, and a widely-held perception that cricket is an exclusive elitist sport, inaccessible to the general populous. However, in recent years, perceptions have slowly altered, leading to an embrace of not only cricket, but all sport.

To understand why NRIs are a strong presence in the cricket scene in Singapore, requires one last piece in the historical puzzle – an account of the Indians’ history in the island nation.

Indians in Singapore

The Indian community is the third largest ethnic group, accounting for 8.4% of the Singapore population³⁴. Despite their small number, Indians have been involved in every facet of life in Singapore. According to Carl Trocki, a historian, Indians constitute “an important segment of Singapore’s social tapestry” (2006: 57). Niru Pillai, the editor of *Aparnam: a dedication: facets of Singapore Indians* (1994), describes the varied and valued contributions of Indians as follows:

... from providing the early labour necessary to build the nation’s infrastructure to laying the very foundations of governance; from the creation of national wealth through commercial activities to providing the intellectual base of academia and industry; from enhancing the rich heritage of Singapore through a celebration of our regional identities to forging a common identity as Singaporean. Far from being a silent minority, our creativity, exuberance and vitality allows us to maintain a distinct identity while playing a vital role in Singapore’s developments and prosperity (1994: 6-7).

The term ‘Indian’ used in the above quotation is a common generic category to encompass migrants from India or their descendents, along with Tamils from Sri Lanka (Mulliner and The-Mulliner 1991: 71). It is important to highlight the fact that the category of ‘Indian’ in Singapore is very broad. Anthropologist Geoffrey Benjamin argues that the term ‘Indian’ cannot be used in Singapore as a valid ethnic

³⁴ Figures taken from *Singapore in figures 2005*, a publication by the Singapore Department of Statistics.

category due to internal diversity (i.e. culture, language, traditions, etc.) (1976: 115-133). The complex Indian ethnic group distinctions must be recognised.

In Singapore, because Tamils form the largest Indian group, the Indians as a whole, in terms of their race, culture and language, are stereotyped as Dravidian South Indian (Siddique and Shotam 1990: 3). This fact is reinforced in choosing Tamil as the national language to represent the Indian community. After Tamil, the other main Indian languages are Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati and Urdu (Sukumar, Prema and Kumar 1992: 47).

Aside from cultural, language and ethnic differences amongst Indians in Singapore, there is a different way of dividing the Indian community. It can be split into three categories: Singaporean Indians, Indian new migrants, and Indian transient guest workers. Each category is different in its background and position in the wider Singapore society. An important point to note is that while these three groups are classed under the broad heading of 'Indian', there is in fact little interaction among the groups. The reasons for the ambivalent interactions amongst the Indian communities can be traced back to the origins of the early Indian migrants to Singapore.

According to the historian Romila Thapar (1990: 2), the presence of Indians in Singapore dates back to as early as the Roman era when Indian merchants were sent as middlemen to Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Cambodia and Borneo to trade for spices that were in high demand. As a result, Indian influence in South-East Asia was already pervasive prior to the arrival of Raffles, the founder of Singapore. The earliest official record of Indians to arrive in Singapore was the contingent that Raffles brought with him. They were 120 Indians in total, made up of soldiers, lascars, assistants, and a notable trader from Penang by the name of Nariana Pillay (Foo and Balachandrer 1998: 29). The soldiers, who were known as sepoys in the British Army, helped establish the earliest British colonial and military presence in Malaya.

British policy and better economic prospects saw an influx of Indians seeking their fortune between the latter half of the 19th century and the early 20th century (Shanmugaratnam in Pillai 1994: 15). Many occupations were filled along caste and

language lines. The majority of Indians who came were involved in the development of Singapore's infrastructure like that of roads, houses, commercial buildings, railways, bridges, canals, wharves and clearing swamps along the coast (see Foo and Balachandrer 1998: 29; Pillai 1994: 15). Of the labourers, most were recruited as 'indentured workers', and they came primarily from Southern India, to seek their fortune and planned to return home afterward (Abraham 2000: 7).

Life for early Indian migrants was tough. Tamil immigrant labourers faced "a regularly organized system of kidnapping" and Tamil women were "regularly recruited for prostitution in... labour situations" (Lee 1991: 156, cited in Quah 1994: 234-235). In an attempt to curb the abuse of the labour recruitment system, controlled legislation enacted by the Indian Government was introduced in 1872 (Foo and Balachandrer 1998: 29). Indian indentured immigration was eventually banned in 1910. Despite that, Indian immigration continued until 1952 when strict immigration controls were enforced with the passing of the Immigration Ordinance Act. This restricted the entry of Indians to those already resident, professionals with specialist qualifications who were already in employment with well-established firms, and their wives and children, causing a dwindling in Indian migration (Shanmugaratnam in Pillai 1994: 16).

In addition to labourers, there were also a small number of well-educated Indian entrepreneurs and professionals who migrated to Singapore. They primarily filled government positions such as clerks, technicians, teachers and traders (Foo and Balachandrer 1998: 29). At the other end of the social scale, the decision to make Singapore a penal station in 1823 brought a few hundred Indian convicts. They were put to work on projects similar to those of the indentured labourers. But unlike their non-convict countrymen, the majority of the convicts remained in Singapore after completing their term (Trocki 2006: 59). They were taught skills like weaving, brick making, tailoring, rope making, printing, carpentry and photography, so as to allow them to acquire legitimate jobs and make decent livelihoods (Foo and Balachandrer 1998: 8).

Indians came to dominate certain sectors like transportation and communications (*ibid*). Some also featured prominently in the political arena due in part to their

concern for themselves as a minority community. This was satiated by the dominant political party – People’s Action Party (PAP) – of the newly independent Singapore, who called for equal opportunities for all races, and meritocracy. The emphasis on education and Indians’ “natural inclination for the English language” caused a dramatic change in the occupational composition of the Indian community up to the 1980s (Pillai 1994: 17). Labourers up-skilled themselves which enabled them to enter into professional, administrative and managerial sectors of the market and there was a reduction in the number of Indians in the labour-intensive sectors.

However, the improved status of the Indian community did not last past the 1980s. In July 1991, the Action Committee on Indian Education (ACIE) published a report entitled *At the Crossroads* on the educational performance of the Indian community. This report argued that on the whole, Indians performed poorly, were marginalised to lower level jobs and were overly represented among drug offenders and criminals (Pillai 1994: 25-26). One reason offered was that there was increased competition in education. Consequently, Singaporean Indians are now over represented at the lower end of the social ladder.

Singapore relies heavily on foreign investment because it has no natural resource base. It also emphasizes attracting foreign talent because of its so-called brain drain (Peebles and Wilson 2002: 263). Since the 1990s, Singapore has actively attracted highly skilled migrants from around the world. A high proportion of these expatriates, 34,000, come from India (Soh 14/2/2005: 20). This wave of Indian migrants is made up of well-educated, wealthy professionals as well as business people. The new make-up is due to the tightening of the off-budget policies that took place in October 2001. The budget stipulated that for foreign workers to obtain an employment pass, there are minimum educational attainments and minimum monthly salary requirements. The minimum monthly salary was increased to SG\$2500. This is slightly higher than the wage that a fresh tertiary graduate would get. This regulation aims to reduce competition for the same jobs as well as quieten the resentment felt by local Singaporeans to the expatriates (Peebles and Wilson 2002: 264).

In addition to the increased competition for mid to high level jobs, a couple of other factors have contributed to the resentment some local Singaporeans feel against elite

migrants. These include the introduction of alien work habits, their access to subsidies for public housing, and their exclusion from mandatory military service³⁵ (*ibid*). The latter however, is only applicable to first generation migrants. Subsequent generations must complete NS in order to retain their Singaporean Permanent Resident (PR) status. I found differing matters of opinion amongst the NRI families on this issue. On the one hand, there are households who have decided to make Singapore their permanent home, have taken up Singaporean citizenship, and have no qualms about their sons doing NS. On the other, many families have opted to take up Singaporean PR status whilst retaining Indian citizenship. These parents expressed uncertainty about their sons prospects of doing military service. Ambiguity about their permanence in Singapore emerged around the topic of NS.

Mohan: The only thing to do is to weigh out the pluses and minuses. Pluses, you get to see the tough side of life and a lot of discipline. You get a bit tougher. That's why you see Singaporeans are both fit and... [*indecipherable*] [But] you are losing two years of your life. So if you decided to continue to live here, it is fine because everybody, there's no question about losing two years because everybody else is losing. But if you don't decide to live here forever...

Yan: So if you stay here, he'll [Kanak] have to do NS then.

Nikhil: Yes, he would.

Yan: And you are fine with that?

Nikhil: Toying with it. Not really too sure but there'll be no harm.

Yan: Would you ever think about going back to India for good?

Nikhil: We really think that the cost of living here and the living standard is a little too high. We are not sure how one adjusts when the source of income is reduced. But we have a kind of solace or consolation or whatever it is, confidence, that back home we have ways and means to live around so it's always at the back of our mind that if it doesn't work out here, we can go back but we haven't really firmed out whether we should or should not.

³⁵ The compulsory conscription of all male Singapore citizens and second generation PR holders, usually upon reaching the age of 18, is known as National Service (NS). They serve a two-year period as Full Time National Servicemen (NSFs) in the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), Singapore Police Force (SPF), or the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF).

Both fathers Mohan and Nikhil, who each have a son aged nine, told me that NS is a consideration, but one that they can put on the back-burner for the time being, until their sons approach their eighteenth birthday which is when they have to decide whether or not to seal their permanent relationship with their new homeland by participating in NS.

The third group of Indians, who are the most visible on the Singaporean population landscape, are transient guest workers. They go to Singapore on short stay work permits as unskilled or semi-skilled workers, working at construction sites and occupations that Singaporeans generally avoid. Due to their social and economic status, this group of Indians is generally shunned.

The three groups of Indians by and large remain distinct groups, having little to do with each other. There is however, a slight increased level of interaction between the well established Singaporean Indians and the new professional migrants. Overlaps between these groups are seen in situations like work environments as well as through social/cultural organisations. The membership of the Indian Association is a good example of this. Another potential site in which these Indians could, and to a small extent, do interact is in the cricket arena.

Having understood the historical developments of Indians and cricket in India plus Singapore, in the next section, I look briefly at a piece of research on World Series Cricket in Australia. This study brings together the two aspects in the context of doing diaspora and constructing Indianness in non-Indian environments. It creates the basis for the contextualisation of why NRIs have taken to cricket to the extent that they have in Singapore.

Indian diaspora and World Series Cricket (WSC)

Manu Madan's (2000) research shows that one arena in which diasporic Indians live out their Indian identity is through the participation (watching, talking, thinking, etc.) in World Series Cricket.

In promoting both global consumerism and postcolonial nationalistic patriotism, World Series Cricket requires its audiences to negotiate and rationalize affiliations and allegiances that exist outside national boundaries through the construction of spatial neighbourhoods. These alliances, inflected by postcolonial narratives of race, nationalism, and international politics, are conditional and shift constantly; they are subject to who is playing on the day. World Series Cricket, and the “play on allegiance” it promotes, provides a space in which diasporic Indian identity can be negotiated and a discourse through which it can be spoken. It serves to highlight the role of popular culture in the process of decolonization and the negotiation of ethnicity and diasporic nationalism (Madan 2000: 24).

Madan’s research on Indians and World Series Cricket (WSC) is useful in analysing the use of popular culture to negotiate ethnicity and diasporic nationalism. In similar fashion to Appadurai (1995), Madan sees WSC as a stage on in which Indians can articulate and play out national and ethnic identities. Based on his research amongst Indians in Australia, he argues that WSC is also a key domain through which diasporic Indians negotiate and articulate their identities. Through participation in the WSC, Madan argues that Indians gain a feeling of empowerment. This arises as a result of the uniting of ‘Indians’ as a whole. This is especially evident in instances where Indians are not within the national boundaries of their ‘homeland’. Madan thus sees cricket as crucial to diasporic Indian communities, because it serves to connect people and is a tool through which they can negotiate and articulate their Indian identity into existence.

The WSC is a ground for contestation of identity for diasporic Indians because it is “a means by which institutionalized notions of nationalism and patriotism are fixed in the experiential consciousness of national subjects” (Madan 2000: 28). Therefore, WSC represents the modern ‘pedagogical’ constructions of nationalism, race and ethnicity on the one hand, while everyday life presents the ‘performative’ discourses for individuals and these tensions are played out on the field. Madan argues that “WSC allows diasporic Indian audiences to legitimately negotiate (or compromise) authorized notions of nationalism in order to make them fit their racial and transnational associations” (*ibid*: 28).

While diasporic Indians can articulate their Indian identity into existence through talking about cricket, this is only one part of their identity. The key to their identity is the possession of multiple subjectivities.

The negotiation of subjectivity is played out within and between these multiple worlds in what Grewal calls the “coalition politics” of identity (p. 235). Here, different aspects of identity are prioritized at different times, depending on the specific agendas that emerge in relation to various situational contexts. These contexts often become the spaces through which identity is discursivised and negotiated. (*ibid*: 29)

Cricket is one prime area for Indians. Nothing else in the nation unites its people like cricket does. It has the potential to unite people who are both in and out of India because on the one hand, cricket has been localized into the Indian cultural national landscape and simultaneously, through media, it has become a “homogeneity of international exchange”. Thus, in the terms of De Certeau (1984 cited in Madan 2000), the WSC has become a “practised place” by Indians which transforms it from a physical place to a conceptual place of consciousness – the stage for negotiation. Therefore, no matter where in the world an Indian finds himself, as long as there is WSC, there will always be a platform for him to negotiate his Indian identity and to participate as a person who belongs ‘naturally’ in that arena.

Conclusion: contextual Indianness through cricket

As I have highlighted in the case of Singapore’s Indian population, use of the all inclusive term ‘Indian’ is problematic. Despite the fact that the label ‘Indian’ possesses contradictions and inconsistencies, there is no more powerful term to use than one that is imbued with the power of national identity. It is a term used by Indians and for Indians.

Madan’s research implies that cricket is a ‘natural’ passion for all Indians. However, this is the case more so with India-direct migrants because they were, for an extended period of time, immersed in an atmosphere that saw cricket as intrinsic in the national Indian cultural landscape. The Indians who have lived for generations in Singapore,

by and large, have less inclination toward the game. They align themselves more so with the Singaporean lifestyle, which in sporting terms means adopting the popular local sport like soccer. Efforts to preserve their Indian identity in a multicultural society extend to the retention of their respective regional Indian mother tongues, religion (i.e. Sikhism and Hinduism), Indian food, Indian dress, Indian cultural practices (i.e. dance and music), etc. Their knowledge of cricket, a historically elite sport in Singapore, is limited at best.

Coming from India as expatriates, NRIs differ in many respects from Singaporean Indians. NRIs are seen as a cut above their local counterparts; Singaporean Indians and transient Indians, as well as a large proportion of Singaporeans. They generally hold senior positions in the work arena due not only to their higher qualifications but also because most come from relatively affluent families in India. This means higher standards of living which manifests in things like luxury accommodation and being able to afford new cars. The sole income of many fathers is often enough to support the family which means their wives can afford to be full-time housewives who invest a lot of time and effort in nurturing their children emotionally, physically and academically. The NRI children are generally successful products of the process. Most of the ones who are in the extremely competitive Singaporean education system do well and gain entry into highly ranked schools. The others, whose schooling is often paid for by their father's companies, also fare well in international schools through which they gain an edge above the locally schooled children for two reasons; one is that international schools have an expatriate, upper class label attached to them, and the second reason is that they gain qualifications that are internationally recognized and hence easily transferable should the family move else where.

There are many differences and similarities between the groups broadly labelled as 'Indian'. Similarities are found in ways that they retain Indian identity through religion, food, language, clothing, cultural performance and associations, shopping, media and technology. Importantly, their prime difference lies in their social status and class which impacts upon their lifestyle and even the ways of doing Indianness listed as similarities. To distinguish themselves from the local and transient Indians, NRIs use cricket as a point of distinction. The naturalised passion for the sport effectively divides the Singaporean Indians from the elite India-direct migrants.

Although the sport may be the layman's religion in India, its status in Singapore due to its historical construct as an elite sport, further marks NRI out as privileged people who can afford to and possess the ability to invest in a game that is on the one hand a traditionally English 'gentleman's game' and on the other, a 'natural' Indian activity.

Therefore, as Madan and Appadurai suggest, cricket empowers NRIs to articulate, negotiate, construct and reconstruct their Indianness into existence and in doing so, transform the Indian version of the game into a distinct Singaporean one. It affects how they imagine and experience the worlds they live in through various social groups, solidarities, distinctions and oppositions. Importantly, this form of Indianness is location specific due to the "relatively autonomous history" of cricket in Singapore. Thus, what manifests is a new Indian ethnicity, one that is far from a natural occurring phenomenon in Singapore and it relies on the concerted actions of NRIs to create such an environment.

In the next chapter, I profile the extent of cricket activities in three families. By doing so, I seek to demonstrate the importance of the roles of individual members within NRI households, which have been shaped and influenced by historical as well as more recent developments (i.e. social, cultural, economic, educational), in the construction of a particular Singaporean specific version of cricket.

Family Accounts

Cricket in the lives of NRI families

Introduction

Families – groups with members interacting and connecting in a fluid and dynamic fashion (Laureau 2002: 52) – are central to this thesis. The familial component is a pivotal factor in the decision making process of diasporas and is crucial in the (re)construction process of Indian identity. This chapter serves to highlight this phenomenon through their involvement in cricket in the lives of three families.

While choices are often made for the intended benefit of all, I argue that it is also crucial to look at the choices of individuals within families, and their roles as ‘impactors’ and as ‘being impacted’. Undeniably, there is scores of literature on diasporic and transnational families (Ong 2002, Anderson 1999, Bryceson and Vuorela 2002) but what I have found to be neglected, in general (exceptions are Rayaprol’s (1997; 2001) studies) is analysis of the contributions of, and impacts on individual members within the family resulting from the migratory experience. More often than not, the family is looked at as an analytical category, which collapses the differences within it. In this chapter, by profiling these families, I look into the varying involvement of four member groups within the nuclear family – fathers, mothers, sons, and daughters. This break-down is crucial because, as Lareau points out in her studies on family interactions, family analysis must incorporate different vantage points and the experiences of everyone, because these are interactional processes embedded in a broader context (2002: 53). Thus, to effectively understand the role of family in diaspora, the larger unit must be broken down for analysis so as to understand that every individual, collective family unit, and the wider NRI community, are constantly interacting in different manners to reinforce one another’s constant and complex formation processes of Indianness.

I detail the accounts of three families – the Kapoors, the Pillais, and the Acharyas. I chose these families because I interacted with them more than the others and can thus give a more in-depth look into the role of cricket in their lives. My interactions with them included semi-structured interviews, casual, non-recorded conversations, playing cricket with the children (and on one occasion, a mother), and also observing both the children and parents' involvement at cricket games and practices. I had to be flexible about how I collected data and made observations, varying them from one family to the next, because at times, I found access to be rather difficult and had to be sensitive to them so as to avoid overly intruding into their lives. Sociologist Annette Lareau (2003; 2002) notes that family observations are hard to carry out but that if they are carried out repeatedly, it is possible for both participants to regain, and for fieldworkers to gain, a routine, which will allow for capturing dynamic and natural relationships (2002: 53). With the limited time I had in the field, I found it hard to develop such a degree of rapport with all the families. The exception was the Acharya family with whom I did manage to build up a relationship that went beyond the researcher-informant tie; to become a friend of the mother and an 'aunt' to the son. Thus, the bulk of the accounts of the families are based more on interviews and casual conversations, with observations serving a supplementary purpose.

In addition to the interactions listed above, a focal event, in the form of an annual boys' cricket tournament, proved to be an excellent opportunity for me to observe the participation, particularly of the Kapoor family, and also to see the extensive and enthusiastic involvement and support of the NRI parents in their sons' sport of choice. This extraordinary occurrence was a key point for insightful analysis (Michrina and Richards 1996: 86) because it demonstrated the workings of cricket in the wider NRI community of which families are crucial to the creation of the atmosphere and without whom, such an event would not be feasible.

Each family is unique. Hence, there are differences relating to their cricket involvement. These differences include the amount of time and effort invested in the sport, the extent and forms of support the children receive from their parents, and even varying degrees of interest in cricket. However, for each unit and more specifically individual family member, there is a connection, more commonly a drive (attributed to a multitude of reasons), to be involved in the sport of their ancestral

homeland and this is what I will convey in this chapter by illustrating the role of cricket in aspects of these families' lives.

The Kapoor family

This family was introduced to me by one of the major figures in the cricketing community, Mr Singh, as a “cricketing family”. They bear such a reputation because every single person in this four member household is, in some respect or another, actively and passionately involved in the sport, which makes the Kapoor family prominent within cricketing circles.

To himself and his children, Mohan, the father, confers the title - “sports nuts”. There are a number of sports that feature in the lives of the Kapoors like golf, soccer, Formula One car racing, snooker, bowling, etc. But cricket is *the* staple component. Mohan attributes this to being a naturally occurring Indian phenomenon.

Mohan: Cricket has something to do with... with genes or something.

Mohan's wife, Rupali, agrees. In the interview with her, she too used a similar 'natural' analogy.

Rupali: ... I think it [cricket] is in the Indian blood you know...

I discovered in talking with a range of people, prevalence in such statements about the naturalisation of cricket amongst Indians. Mohan was forthcoming in professing his love for the sport with statements like “I can watch cricket 24-hours a day!” He spoke of rushing home from work and even missing work so that he could watch crucial matches live. He talked about never tiring of watching re-runs of momentous cricket matches on DVD. He described how he plays cricket actively on most Saturday mornings in a social team called the *Avengers*, which is made up of his friends and select colleagues, most of whom are probably NRIs because he says that Hindi is the common language of communication amongst them. He detailed his involvement as an umpire and informal coach in his children's daily games in their apartment. I got

the sense that he lives and breathes cricket, and that his love for the sport surpasses all else to the point of consuming him.

Rupali's attitude and interest in cricket differs significantly from Mohan. Despite having spent most of her life in India, Rupali expressed no idea of innate passion for the sport, only going as far as watching the occasional match when the Indian team is playing. And even then, she only likes to watch when the team is winning. Her interest and involvement in cricket only came about recently during the 2003 Cricket World Cup when her son, Arjun, first picked up the sport.

Rupali: I wasn't interested in cricket... Not until I had children. Not till my son was interested in cricket. Only because of my son. I used to take him for the training. And somehow, I met Mr Singh and we started off. And that interest came.

Rather than actively participating in cricket like Mohan, Rupali plays a supportive role that facilitates cricketing activities in the Kapoor household. Because her primary motivation is to create a supportive environment to nurture her children's love for the game, it is in the realm of youth cricket that she participates 'proactively' and has established herself as a pioneer and icon, thus gaining the respect of numerous Indian families involved.

Noting that there were few formal avenues for Arjun to play cricket, Rupali took the initiative to introduce the sport as a Co-Curricular Activity (CCA)³⁶ into his school, Planet Primary School.

Rupali: And when my son went to Planet Primary, there was no cricket there. But there were quite a few kids interested in cricket. Our principal is extremely good, so she said, "Go!"

³⁶ Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) are extra-curricular activities that take place on top of the regular school curriculum. Participation in at least one such Life Skill activity is compulsory for every student. The idealised function of CCAs is to meet the goal of holistic development in students. There is a wide range of CCA activities to suit most interests. The common ones fall into categories like sport and games (i.e. soccer, swimming), uniform groups (i.e. Boy/girl Scouts, St. Johns), and performing arts (i.e. choir, band). There are also assorted other clubs and societies (i.e. art and craft, chess, Chinese/Malay/Indian culture, photography).

In addition to being the facilitator of the cricket CCA, Rupali is also the Hindi language³⁷ person in-charge. She took on these roles because she was the person who introduced the programs to the school. Rupali introduced Hindi because she saw a demand for it with the increase in Indian children coming from Hindi-speaking families, many in similar situations to the Kapoors.

As a full-time home-maker, Rupali describes herself as an “active parent supporter”. Her days are occupied with many school related activities, including the organisation of camps during the holidays, but the highlight of the year is the school’s annual cricket tournament – ‘Stumped’. She coordinates this in partnership with a group of parent supporters, which, I noted during the tournament, was made up largely of NRI mothers. As a result of the availability of cricket as a CCA and Hindi as a mother tongue subject option, Planet Primary School has seen an increase in the attendance of children from NRI families who live in the neighbouring areas. Rupali related how she had recently learnt of a few new entrants who enrolled in the school purely on the basis of the availability of cricket as a CCA.

Rupali: ... I have just come to know, there are three or four new entries into primary one, who will be joining us from January onward, that they joined only because there is cricket in our school.

Whilst the initial motivation for having cricket as a CCA is due to the love of the sport, Rupali enlightened me of a tangible reward for their son’s involvement. The Kapoor’s choice of primary school for their children is based on proximity to their home. Arjun, aged nine, is currently in his third year at school. His sister, Priyanka, will attend the same institution when she reaches schooling age. Mohan and Rupali feel that having to commute over long distances to a reputable school is not necessary at the primary level. They did, however, express their aspirations for Arjun to attend

³⁷ In the Singapore Education system, it is compulsory for a child to learn a second language, from primary level right up to the end of secondary school. This subject is known as ‘mother tongue’. The three most common languages offered are Mandarin, Malay and Tamil. This is congruent with the population make-up of 78% Chinese, 12% Malay, and 8% Indian (largely of Tamilian ancestry). Often, the ethnicity of the child determines what language he or she takes up. With the increase in migration numbers of Hindi-speaking Indians, Hindi is becoming increasingly common in government schools. If there exists a sizeable number of students who want to take up the language, it can be introduced as a core subject during the mother tongue program when students are split up into classes according to their respective mother tongues. If the option is not available in school, Hindi language students spend their weekends studying at the DAV Hindi School.

an elite boys' secondary school, citing either Raffles Institution (RI) or Anglo Chinese School Independent (ACS (I)). Rupali's emphasis on Arjun's education reflects the sentiment expressed by the middle class Indian families in Rayaprol's (1997) Pittsburgh case. In the case of the Kapoors, to gain access to these institutions, they expect Arjun to use a combination of his academic record and cricket participation.

Rupali: To secondary school. So many kids have got in without the PSLE [Primary School Leaving Examination³⁸]. PSLE still to come but they have already secured seats in the secondary schools. Based on either their marks, or their CCA. I mean, something which they have excelled in... the advantage of cricket is that all the good secondary schools, boys' schools, have cricket... So it is advantageous for your kids to be in cricket because there are few cricketers. So you will anyway be taken in. So if you are reasonably well in your studies, and you are into playing cricket, the chances of you getting into RI or ACS becomes pretty easy³⁹.

These two schools of British colonial heritage are well established and consistently ranked amongst the top ten schools throughout Singapore by the Ministry of Education. They are among the handful of schools that have a cricket CCA program and regularly produce winning teams in inter-school tournaments. By attending either RI or ACS (I), Rupali and Mohan expect that Arjun will be able to get a good education while simultaneously developing and nurturing his cricketing talent, and that his educational opportunities will be enhanced by cricket participation.

Arjun's interest in cricket, which is fuelled and reinforced to a large extent by his family, is significant. Mohan, in describing his son's attitude toward sport, says that

³⁸ At the end of primary school, students sit for the national Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). The examination determines whether the student is ready to leave primary school by passing; however the primary purpose of the examination is to eventually allocate places in secondary school based on score. The score is aggregate-based and school placement is determined by the student's performance in the examination.

³⁹ ACS (I) and RI are independent boys' educational institutions. These schools follow the curriculum set out by the Ministry of Education (MOE). However, they differ from government schools in that they have autonomy in setting their own scale of fees, admission of students, and implementation of school programmes and administration. MOE permits independent schools to admit 20% of their students through discretionary admission. If a child excels in an area that falls under the school's specialisation (i.e. cricket in the case of RI and ACS (I)), he may be admitted under discretionary admission (www.moe.gov.sg, www.acsi.gov.sg and www.ri.gov.sg).

Arjun likes lots of sport but, “Cricket is different. Cricket is fanaticism.” To emphasize this, he refers to two recent incidents. The first was an incident when Arjun chose to stay home alone to watch a match while the rest of the family attended a birthday party. The other, which occurred the very day I interviewed the family, was when Arjun called his father at work to ask whether he could miss school the following day to watch a game. He was denied this request. Rupali and Mohan put their foot down when it comes to school. Arjun’s love for cricket is seemingly on par with his father’s. In terms of his active participation however, Arjun’s far surpasses Mohan’s. I show why and how when I give a run-down of a typical week of cricket in the Kapoor household.

The youngest member of the Kapoor household, Priyanka, is the third “sports nut”. When I first saw the children playing together, I mistook her for a boy because she had short hair and had a similar physique to her brother. Her parents corrected me promptly, in a manner that suggested to me that I was not the first to make such a mistake, saying that Priyanka likes to think that she is a boy and tries to copy everything her brother does. This means that she too plays cricket on a regular basis.

Priyanka picked up cricket about six months prior. Comparing themselves to Priyanka when they were her age, five and a half, Rupali and Mohan commented that their knowledge of cricket terminology was no where near their daughter’s. Mohan attributes Priyanka’s early start in the sport to her brother’s influence. Mohan and Rupali are enthusiastic about their daughter’s interest in the cricket. In spite of the fact that Priyanka is not yet a student at Planet Primary School, Rupali allows her to train in the cricket CCA program. She is the only female participant. Unlike Arjun, this is Priyanka’s only avenue of cricket outside the home. While the opportunities for boys to play cricket are fairly limited, by comparison, the chances for girls are almost non-existent. Rupali laments this fact and is trying to change the situation to her daughter’s benefit. She told me that if Priyanka reaches a stage where her cricketing ability is comparable to the rest of the boys in the team, she will speak to the administrators at the Singapore Cricket Association and insist that her daughter be included in the school squad during competitions, thereby transforming the team into a mixed-gendered one. This is something that is thus far, unheard of, and could potentially revolutionise the sport here.

Of all the families I interviewed, I found the Kapoor family to be the most involved in cricket, in the sense that every member is an active and willing participant. The involvement of each individual varies. As can be seen from the description thus far, Mohan's 'natural' love for cricket is infectious and rubs off on his children; to a greater extent on his son. Rupali's supportive role makes the sport a feasible activity for her children. Arjun and Priyanka are the two that actually play cricket, many times together, on a regular basis: the former playing for a love of the sport, and the latter primarily in order that she may keep up and be able to communicate on the same wave-length as her sibling and her father. Each family member's involvement in cricket is intricately intertwined with another's; everyone's cricketing endeavours support and are supported by other members of the family.

Activities relating to cricket in the Kapoor family manifest extensively. They range from indirect input, which is best characterised by Rupali, to direct involvement as demonstrated by the rest of the family. The latter includes formal training, informal playing, watching matches on television and the internet, watching live games at various cricket association grounds, reading about the latest cricket happenings around the globe on the internet, playing cricket computer games, and discussing cricket at school as well as at home, amongst friends and family. Not a day goes by without cricket manifesting in one or multiple forms in the Kapoor household. The following is an over-view of cricket in a week in the life of this "cricketing family".

Belonging to the National Under-10 team, Arjun has professional coaching with the Singapore Cricket Association (SCA) located in Kallang twice a week. These sessions take place on Tuesday evenings, between the hours of four and six, and on Saturdays, from eight to ten in the morning. The aim of this team is primarily to groom players for the National Under-13 squad, providing them with a few years of correct cricketing technique; hence they get few opportunities to compete against teams from other associations or clubs. On Saturdays however, after the training segment of the program, Arjun and his team get to pit their skills against other boys who train at Kallang. These boys are ones who did not make the National team after pre-season trials in February, but are seen to possess potential for development. A third group of boys play on Sunday. In terms of their cricketing skills, these boys fall short of the others. However, they are undeniably, every bit as much, if not more, enthusiastic.

The new young boys especially, demonstrate a raw, untamed passion for the sport, desiring to emulate their cricket heroes in games but not putting much effort into exercises and drills, much to the exasperation of the coach, Sudhir.

I imagine that when Arjun first started playing cricket, he fell into the third category. Rupali commented that it is in large part due to the professionally run training programs that Arjun and other boys have managed to polish-up their cricketing skills.

Rupali: ... in the last one and a half to two years, since more and more kids of Arjun's age have become more and more interested in cricket, the changes have been phenomenal. When they started, they didn't know how to take a catch or run in between the wicket. Now you look, it's not only him. Most of the boys of his age who have been playing for the last one, one and a half year, they have improved dramatically.

On top of the formal coaching Arjun receives at Kallang, he also has a weekly training at school with the CCA program that Rupali introduced. Priyanka takes part in these sessions. The coaches from the SCA are sent out to various schools to run weekly after-school cricket programs. Planet Primary is one such venue. In addition to training, coaches also act as talent scouts, where upon seeing a boy with potential, they will encourage him to trial for the national squad or take part in additional training at the SCA on Saturdays to speed along the upgrading of his cricketing ability.

Because the coaches from the SCA are employed full time by the association to coach, cricket as a CCA in schools is not free of charge. Rupali feels that the fee, and the perception amongst Chinese and Malays that cricket is only for Indians, is stopping many boys from taking part. By organising the annual cricket tournament, she hopes to raise money to make cricket free for the initial few months, giving children the opportunity to try it out.

Rupali: Now, what we are planning to do is, the tournament that we are organising. We are planning to keep the funds for our training next year, because this tournament has been sponsored by the Indian Association and our school. So we are still charging the teams. So we

need the funds to make it for the Planet Primary children to try it out for two, three months, so that they get an idea of what cricket is. [Un]til now, we didn't have that kind of funds to make it free. So next year, our objective is to make it free for three months, to let even the Chinese and the Malay[s] to come and try, and then let them decide whether they want to pursue cricket or not.

From the outline of the history and background in chapter two, I established why cricket is not a popular game in Singapore. This fact is reflected statistically in the 2001 National Sports Participation Survey conducted by the Singapore Sports Council where cricket did not even feature in the top twenty sports⁴⁰. Knowledge of the sport is not wide-spread and this is something that Rupali is trying to change through small initiatives, starting with the introduction of cricket to non-Indian children. As reflected in the comment above, Rupali feels that Chinese and Malays are the ones who lack knowledge and interest in cricket. This is not the case for Indians⁴¹, particularly NRIs. This phenomenon was verified during the 'Stumped' tournament where the ethnic make-up of the players was approximately ninety percent Indian, with a handful of Sri Lankans, English, Australians and Chinese. The Planet Primary School's two representative teams were made up solidly of Indians, with the exception of Mark, the token Chinese boy, who did not get much playing time and resorted to keeping himself occupied by picking up litter, a task for which he was commended at the end of the day by his school principal.

Of the two Planet Primary teams, their A squad, which Arjun belongs to, performed well, being placed third in the competition. This is undoubtedly due in large part to their formal, highly organised and structured weekly training sessions. In addition to these however, it must be noted that Arjun and the boys play a lot of informal cricket as well, which inevitably contributes to the honing of their playing skills. For example, school recesses are often times during which they would get together for a quick game. And if they cannot play cricket, they will have discussions about things pertaining to the sport. Mohan comments that:

⁴⁰ Refer to Appendix B.

⁴¹ According to Mr Subra, the administrator of the SCA, cricket does feature in the local Tamil newspapers, particularly news of the Indian team. Despite this, interest amongst Singaporean Indians for cricket is not huge.

Mohan: The topic is always some where around. They are never very far from starting the topic.

Outside of school, Arjun also plays cricket most evenings after school with his friends who live nearby, many of whom attend the same school and belong to the cricket CCA.

Rupali: In fact because Yushan [neighbourhood estate], there are so many Indians and Planet Primary, all children are staying close-by, they play cricket everyday... There's a ground opposite Flower Country Club where they go and play cricket everyday.

Yan: Just after school?

Rupali: No, no. In the evenings.

Yan: Who organises that?

Mohan: That's unorganised, that's like my cricket. They just gather in the evenings. It's an alternative to going to the swimming pool or...

Yan: So how long do they play for in the evenings?

Rupali: One, two hours.

Yan: Parents allow that?

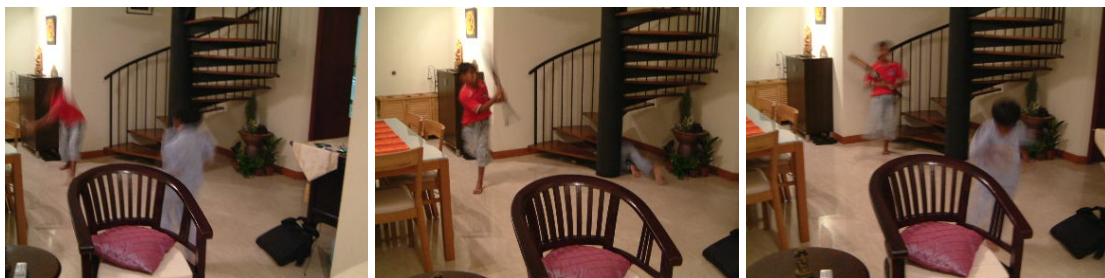
Rupali: No choice.

For Arjun, the love of cricket is the common factor amongst his friends. They train together, play informally both in and outside of school, talk about cricket, etc. The sport serves to crystallize their relationships. Mohan articulated that the closeness of the friendships that Arjun has developed is determined by the boys' level of interest and skill in cricket.

Mohan: I can tell you my son, the best friend that he has, is the guy who is as fanatic about cricket as he is. Before he started playing cricket, in his friends circle, there were a group of these particular four or five boys who were equally strong friends. But since they had started constantly playing cricket, these two have become very very good friends. Because they both love cricket at the same level and both are equally good. Whereas the other two or three boys, either have not

taken cricket as seriously or... so though they are friends, still friends but you can see the difference in the level of closeness.

Whilst Mohan clearly articulates that cricket is central to his son's friendships, a fact that is not stated is that the majority, if not all of these cricket-loving friends are boys from NRI families. This is inevitable because in the Singaporean environment, it is an exclusive sport, an arena in which new Indian migrants have come to be dominant. Therefore, the sport effectively filters out the people who are not 'naturally' inclined to the game. It is a mentality that may not be acknowledged but is pervasive. Cricket is thus used to justify the validity of a division and demarcation between social/ethnic groups (NRI versus Singaporean; NRI versus Singaporean Indian; professional NRI versus transient Indian migrant). When NRIs associate with one another on a regular basis using cricket as a premise, they reinforce one another's projects in constructing and reconstructing their Indianness simply by being with like-minded people. This is particularly vital for young children who have grown up in Singapore, and unlike their parents, may not be aware or are unconcerned with the retention of their Indian heritage. This factor explains why parents like Mohan and Rupali are thrilled that both their children have taken to cricket enthusiastically, because what they do when they take part in the sport, unbeknown to them, is live and play out an aspect of their Indian identity.



[Figure 4.1] Arjun (batting) and Priyanka playing in their apartment (source: author)

Mohan and Rupali encourage their children to play cricket as frequently as possible, to the extent that they are allowed to play in their apartment. This is a common practice amongst the Indian families I encountered, which in part explains the sparseness of ornaments I observed in their homes. In the evenings, after Mohan returns from work, seated on the couch, he takes on the role as the umpire while Arjun and Priyanka pit their cricketing skills against one another in their living room. In

addition to scoring and making sure that play does not get out of hand, Mohan also acts as a moderator; instructing and reminding Arjun to tone down his playing to a level that is compatible with Priyanka. This form of informal play time ranges anywhere between half an hour, to one and a half hours. Mohan deems this form of playing as spontaneous and is something which he can relate to more, likening it to 'his' cricket, in terms of his weekly Saturday games with his friends and also as something similar to the game he played whilst growing up in India.

Apart from playing cricket, the three "sports nuts" of the house watch a lot of cricket. In fact, as I was interviewing Rupali and Mohan, the children were watching the cricket channel in their play room. Even while Arjun is studying or doing homework, he does so in front of the television preferably with live cricket on, either that or something from his extensive cricket DVD collection, or as a last resort, some other sport program. When there is no cricket on television, Arjun and Mohan may be found logged onto the internet, checking the latest happenings in the sport around the world.

Rupali: Not only TV. How about the internet? You don't watch, but you can get the live scores going on, on the internet. Then either of them will be doing the refresh every five minutes.

Cricket creates an avenue of communication between who Rupali calls her "two obsessed family members", Mohan and Arjun. The game acts as an interest that is capable of crossing generation gaps. A common interest in cricket has created a point of connection between father and son, with the former more involved in Arjun's life because of his own personal interest in the sport. This phenomenon was similarly noted by Lareau who found that mothers encouraged their children to take up activities that their husbands were interested in, so as to develop a deeper father-child bond, strengthening the already strong connection that fathers have with their children, as a result of being the dominant presence in the household (2002: 33). Fathers play a powerful symbolic role in their respective families. Effectively, they set the tone for the household. And in the case of the Kapoor family, this is demonstrated by the children taking after Mohan's interest in cricket and by Rupali facilitating cricketing activities.

There is a clear division between Mohan and Rupali about their responsibilities pertaining to their children. Mohan spoke about this explicitly.

Mohan: We have a dividing line. I mean, it's an agreed thing amongst us, like education is her responsibility. Sports and other outside things are my responsibility. Although I can't do things on weekdays. She is the chauffeur, taking them round. And she is the one who actively created the cricket team in school. I could not do things like that. But as a responsibility area, my area is outward.

The distribution of parental responsibility places Mohan on one side with all the fun and leisure activities. For example, he takes his children bowling every Sunday and umpires their cricket games in the evenings. The only times he takes Arjun to cricket is on Saturdays when he himself plays cricket at the Indian Association. He will drop Arjun off and pick him up afterward as an incidental errand because it is on the way. If Mohan does not play cricket, then Arjun will either be dropped off by Rupali or by another parent through an unofficial carpooling system.

Comparatively, Rupali is at the other end of the duty spectrum, placing emphasis on more serious things like school work, and she intentionally chauffeurs her children around. From what I observed when interviewing the couple together, the support Rupali provides in the form of chauffeuring, is not something that she is given much credit for because this task is not active cricket participation. Thus Rupali expresses that Mohan takes the duty of driving the children around for granted.

Mohan: She supports but she doesn't play itself.

Rupali: He doesn't realise that there are other forms of support... During the weekdays, who's the chauffeur around our house? Because my son goes to golf, he goes to cricket. So I have to take him for cricket, I have to take him for golf. Now my daughter is also starting golf. And she started cricket. So who's doing all that?

This is a common occurrence in families that Lareau pointed out writing that in general, "Fathers add color, fun, informality, and "accent" to family life. Mothers were likely to worry, chastise, and punish. Fathers were playful..." (2002: 46). In

their capacity as entertainers, fathers become the ‘gravitational centre’ of conversations and family interactions, as demonstrated earlier of how Mohan oversees his children’s evening games. The only mention Rupali gets in this context is of how she would reprimand Arjun and Priyanka if the playing gets out of hand.

Mohan and Rupali play different roles. In relation to cricket, the former is the ideological instigator and perpetrator of the passion for the sport within the family. Mohan continually fuels this interest through his enthusiastic participation in a number of ways - as an umpire, player, or ardent spectator. His involvement in the sport is clearly visible, as is reflected in his bold remarks about his love for cricket. Rupali on the other hand, plays a practical role. She makes her family members’ cricket activities possible through various means of support. Some of her support, akin to most mothers, is largely invisible, because it is subsumed under her responsibilities as a full time house-maker. An example of this is that of chauffeuring her children to and from sporting activities. Mothers like Rupali incorporate the institution of sport through domestic labour. This maternal work is crucial to the maintenance and reproduction of sporting structures and practices (Thompson 1999: 2). Rupali’s other form of support, where she has created new avenues and opportunities for children’s cricket, like organising the ‘Stumped ‘06’ tournament, is proactive. Because these feats are not common amongst mothers or even fathers for that matter, they have gained her notability and an iconic standing within the cricket and wider NRI community.

Although the roles that Mohan and Rupali play are starkly contrasting, they are complimentary. Without one, the other would not exist. If Mohan was not passionate about cricket, it would have been unlikely that Arjun would have watched it on cable and started playing, which means that Rupali would never have had to introduce cricket as a CCA into Planet Primary, and if Arjun did not play then it would have been unlikely for Priyanka to pick up the sport, and so on and so forth. A chain reaction seems to exist, linking one incident to another, involving every member of the household. However, what I want to suggest is that the influence is not simply unidirectional. The system is in fact, one of interconnections in which the actions (or perhaps lack thereof) of a person impact and are impacted by other members of the

family. It is a dynamic, simultaneously conscious and unconscious, support network, and the reason for its perpetuation and development is - the rewards.

Because the Kapoor family invests a lot of time and effort into cricket, their rewards are manifold, some of which are tangible and others not. Tangible rewards include access to elite education for Arjun, introduction of cricket to Planet Primary as a CCA, the development of a much anticipated annual boys' tournament, and Arjun's selection for the Singapore National Under-10 Cricket team. In comparison, there are many more intangible rewards – a closer relationship between the children and their father, Mohan being able to bring the memories of his past into the present, a network of like-minded friends for Rupali, the wider cricket community as a 'surrogate family' to provide social support in the absence of the traditional extended Indian family, recognition for Rupali as a pioneer and also the public demonstration of her fulfilling her role as a good mother, closer ties between siblings, etc. Indeed, the title "cricketing family" is most apt in describing the Kapoors because by looking at this household, it is clear that the reason for the flourishing of the love of cricket lies in the vital component of each individual contributing, supporting one another, and hence they do cricket together, as a family. This level of participation in cricket is unique to the Kapoors. In comparison, the following family, the Pillais, invest a lot less time and effort into cricket. And the result is that their passion for the sport is not as great and hence the rewards they gain are fewer.

The Pillai family

When signing off the ethics consent form for this research on behalf of his family, Saurav, the father, wrote next to Neha, his eldest daughter's name, the words 'keen cricketer'. She is a fourteen year old girl whom I got to know through the girls' training program at the SCA. I interviewed her with her parents and brother at Kallang, one Saturday morning after training.

The Pillai family moved to Singapore three and a half years ago. Of all the families I conducted interviews with, they had been in Singapore for the shortest period of time.

This nuclear unit is made up of five people. Neha is the eldest of the three children. She is one of two in the household who plays cricket on a regular basis.

Saurav likes cricket but is not nearly as crazy about the game as Mohan. He used to play cricket with his son when they were in India, but now, he only plays occasionally when there are social gatherings with other Indians. His interest in sport has shifted to golf. And he says that he cannot afford to devote time to both sports. Currently, his cricket involvement mainly pertains to watching international matches on television, especially when the Indian team is playing. He recounted that during the 2003 World Cup, there were regular gatherings of Indians, and that they watched the matches together over the internet.

Saurav: And for the 2003 World Cup, we used to watch on the web. So we used to get the projector, and project the web on the wall. That's how we used to watch it. Now they have all the channels [cricket channel on cable television]... I think because the subscribing of the web was more expensive. So we got wise and saved some money by watching it together. One subscription is enough. Now all my friends subscribe [to cable] and watch at home.

Even though Saurav is not actively involved in cricket, he sees the importance of the sport as a family activity and a commonality amongst his friends. He commented that cricket provides NRIs with a focus and a reason to gather, albeit less so now with the increase in subscription frequency to the cricket channel amongst these households. The latter is a point that he noted with regret because he values such gatherings for their facilitation of family and community cohesion.

Saurav: I haven't been playing cricket a lot. But we watch cricket, all Indians watch cricket as a family and it's like family gathering whenever we watch cricket... Especially for Indians, it's about family gathering and coming together as family whenever there's a cricket match. So I think in that way it is good.

Notably, like the Kapoors, Saurav's cricket watching friends are all NRIs. He finds it difficult to cross cultural barriers and the time he attempted to do so using cricket as a vehicle, it was with fellow expatriates, an Australian family, rather than Singaporeans.

Yan: But why only Indians?

Saurav: Well, I don't know. But Australians could join us some times if we are friends with them. Some times we do plan but things didn't realise. I had an Australian boss and friend, so during the World Cup, we were planning to sit down together and watch it. But at that time, as a community, there were four families meeting and he thought that he would be a misfit amongst all Indians... because we were already three, four Indian families, one Australian family would have felt neglected and not part of the group. But if it were two Australian and two Indian families, that might have worked and we would have got along pretty well.

These gatherings described, panned out as unintentionally exclusive to NRIs. The events were fun and fondly remembered by all parties involved – fathers, mothers and children. Atmospheres of the 'natural' Indian love for cricket were created and supported by the enthusiasm of the parents (largely the fathers), thus, interest in the game inevitably rubbed off on some children. Akin to Arjun, it was during the 2003 World Cup that Neha picked up the game and started to play informally with friends who lived in the same condominium complex. Her cricket companions were made up of children from NRI families. Saurav described how Neha's interest in the game grew out of the cricket gatherings.

Saurav: During the World Cup tournament. And we all subscribed to it. And we as families used to all sit together and watch it. It was like a friends' gathering and we all enjoyed it. And in those friends and families, most of them were boys and she [Neha] was the only girl. But they got hooked onto cricket and started playing everyday. Everyday. Fortunately India did well in that World Cup and they were the runners-up after Australia. So they got all hooked onto the game and she was very excited about it.

From playing informally with her 'condo friends', Neha went on to taking part in structured cricket at Kallang, where she has become one of the core members and outstanding players in the program. Of the group of boys she had started playing with, she is the only one who has followed the game seriously whereas the others have lost interest. A couple of reasons may be attributed to Neha's sustained interest and active participation in the sport. One could be her regular involvement in formal cricket and the other may be credited to the support of her parents.

Neha's mother, Vimala, is not a huge cricket fan. Like Saurav, she would watch and play at social gatherings. When I suggested to her that she could play with the girls on Saturday as another mother, Pratibha had recently started doing, she outrightly declined. Neha, aghast at the suggestion, exclaimed "Oh my god!" In the Pillai family, the mother's involvement in cricket goes as far as watching it with family and friends, and by providing moral and practical support for her children in their sporting endeavours.

Similarly, the father's support is largely limited to the confines of their home. Saurav encourages Neha and his youngest child, Ishan, to be actively involved and also to take new initiatives in the sport. For example, he has encouraged Neha to get a group of girls together to play in school, he has suggested that she write a regular column in the local paper about cricket so that more people, especially girls, can learn about the sport, and he is particularly supportive of Neha's quiet ambition to get into the Singapore National Women's cricket team, as and when it forms. Currently, due to the shortage of keen female players, the formation of a team does not seem to be viable. It is, however, something that the SCA is working towards as they have received many invitations for a women's team to participate in international tournaments from countries including Thailand, Hong Kong and Australia⁴².

⁴² I noted this fact when the coach, or other facilitators at the SCA, mentioned this on a number of occasions as a means of motivating the girls to recruit more players and to take the training seriously. During one particular training session, Mr Prabhat, the overseer of the training program, mentioned to Neha that he wanted her as part of a team that he was planning to take to Australia. When I queried Neha about this, she said that there is a lot of such talk but nothing ever eventuates. In the local girls' cricket scene, other than regular Saturday morning training, they only have an annual cricket carnival to look forward to. The event this year saw the participation of nine six-a-side teams, totalling approximately sixty girls. This demonstrates that there are girls who are interested in cricket, and it is a matter of getting them organised and for them to take the sport more seriously.

Saurav is supportive of Neha's involvement in cricket because of the benefits and skills that she stands to gain; character and leadership traits that he himself considered that he picked up through playing cricket when he was a youth.

Saurav: I think for the individual, it is very good for development because it is a team sport... being a team player, taking the initiative and all that. So it has helped me in the past and I see her developing that skill of being able to drive things, if they are not coming, call them up to make sure they are coming... And playing with the boys. She is able to play with the boys and in that way make more friends. That's always nice. And being part of a team also... I think the major thing is development of the individual, as a better person.

Neha's cricketing involvement has reduced significantly since the 2003 World Cup. She no longer plays outside of Kallang. Like many of the girls I got to know, Saturday morning is the only time Neha plays cricket all week. This infrequency is prevalent amongst the girls, a pattern that some have maintained for as long as three or even four years, many of them picking up the sport only upon their move to Singapore. I also found that there is a general tendency for females to start playing later because their ages ranged from twelve to eighteen. The Kapoor's youngest child bucks this trend. Aside from being too young, another reason for Priyanka not playing with these girls is that Rupali does not think highly of their cricketing ability, saying that the younger boys can beat them easily.



[Figure 4.2] Neha (third from right) during training at Kallang (source: author)

Neha is one of the younger players amongst the girls. Because she is one of the most talented players, the coach often appoints her as a captain when they play games. She never fails to oppose his choice, coming up with an array of excuses not to take on the role. The reason being she feels that she is too young and inexperienced in comparison to the other girls. Having played cricket for a shorter length of time, Neha's ability can be attributed to her greater investment in the sport. She says that on average, cricket specific activities like playing and watching, takes up about five hours of her time per week. This is when there is no important match involving India, Australia or England. On top of cricket, she also plays tennis twice a week for about three and a half hours, and she goes to the gym about twice a week. There, she does cardiovascular exercises like running and cycling, activities that help her maintain her fitness for cricket.

Neha: ... it's mainly to keep myself fit. We do a lot of running here [SCA] so I have to exercise.

Yan: Running between the wickets is very tiring.

Neha: Yah. Running between the wickets I find it kind of easy because you don't hit every ball and run but when he [the coach] makes you go around [the cricket ground] for the warm up, I find that really hard.

Neha is inclined toward sport, particularly cricket. This is evident in her investment of time into doing activities that support her performance on the field. Her sporty personality is a stark contrast to her sister. Lalita, the Pillai's middle child was described by Vimala as an "art person". I did not get the opportunity to meet her. However, I did learn about her from Saurav, who highlighted one particular incident of the one time she had to play cricket as school.

Saurav: But you know something interesting. One day, she had an ECA [Extra Curricular Activity] on cricket and she said "I am going to play cricket today". And she comes back to say that she was amongst the best three players. I asked her "How did you know?" And she said that everyone was saying that. She never played but like, maybe it's in the blood.

Yan: Maybe it's in the genes. Do you think it's from the mother or from the father?

Vimala: Father.

Saurav's comment is similar to Mohan's, in that it exemplifies the naturalisation of cricket in Indians. The important difference is that Vimala emphasizes that it is from the father, implying that it is natural for cricket to be in the blood of males rather than females. Following this logic, it is understandable that Ishan, the youngest child at eight years old, plays cricket. He also trains at the SCA on Saturday mornings. But unlike Neha, he gets the opportunity to play the game informally outside structured settings. For example, he takes his bat to school two to three times a week and plays with his friends during lunch time. He prefers the latter because he says that he does not have any friends at the SCA. Although the school that the Pillai children attend does offer cricket as an extra-curricular activity for boys, Ishan does not participate. A reason Neha attributed is that unlike the coaches at the SCA, the one at their school is not a professional cricket coach. The lack of a girls' team may reflect the lack of the game's popularity amongst females. Despite the fact that Neha is a fairly keen cricketer, she expressed that her cricketing endeavours are likely to stop cricket toward the final years of high school, so that she can concentrate on her studies. This is common amongst the girls who train at the SCA; studying for tests and exams being the primary reason for not showing up for practice, reflecting the mentality that academic pursuits supersede cricket and sport in general. With this mindset prevalent amongst the girls, the chances of developing a competitive female squad are diminished. For Neha however, as she is only in grade nine, she believes that she will keep playing for at least another year, and hopes that she will become a member of an official women's team.

The Pillai family's cricket involvement is considerably less than that of the Kapoors. Their limited participation corresponds with their level of interest in the sport. Similarly to the Kapoor family, the father is the instigator of interest in the game, which rubbed off on his children, Neha and Ishan, during the 2003 Cricket World Cup. However, because Saurav does not have a burning passion for the game, neither does his family. Rather, he emphasizes the value of cricket as a means to achieving desirable outcomes - a social lubricant amongst NRIs and a good activity for the

individual characteristic development of his children. Saurav and Vimala adopt a hands-off approach to the support of their children's cricketing endeavours. They leave it largely up to Neha and Ishan to take their own initiatives with regards to the game. Because of the limited support in the home, the children have to find avenues for cricket outside, in order to support their interest. For both, one such way is to take part in training at the SCA. While Ishan has a couple of options, preferring playing with his friends at school to structured practices, Neha has no other viable option. In fact, she enjoys Saturday morning sessions in part because she has developed close friendships with a few of the girls who are fellow NRI seniors from the same school. For both Neha and Ishan, the company affects their enjoyment of the game, reflecting their father's perception of cricket as a social event.

Neha's attitude toward cricket is akin with that of most of the girls in that the reasons they articulated for taking up cricket were unlike the boys who took up the sport 'naturally' because it was in their biological make-up. This is not dissimilar even for Priyanka, whom Mohan says took up the sport because of her brother's influence, not because it is in her 'genes' or 'blood' like it is in Arjun's or Ishan's. Cricket then, although commonly regarded as a natural occurrence in Indian blood, is considered to be more frequently found in male Indian blood, an idea which helps justify the lack of female participation as well as their giving up of the sport eventually.

A comparison of the Kapoor and Pillai families reveals that the more effort invested in cricket by a household, the greater the rewards they reap. For the Kapoors in particular, the greatest underlying reward is the instilling a form of Indianness in their children, simply because they are participating in an activity that is widely recognised as 'Indian'. Cricket is used as a means of creating a new, unobtrusive but exclusive Indian ethnicity for Ishan and Priyanka to identify with, in a land they will call home for years to come, but a place their parents may continue to feel alien in. Their ideas of their ancestral homeland will be intricately linked to its cultural import for as long as it is relevant, interests them, and on condition that their parents actively create an environment that supports their endeavours in the sport.

I found the Kapoors' investment in cricket to be characteristic of NRI families who expressed their permanence in Singapore into the foreseeable future. The

circumstance of the Pillai family differs because Saurav's posting is on expatriate assignment and there is no certainty that his family will stay in Singapore in the long run. This is why his children are schooled in an international school, which gives them a degree of flexibility and shapes them as global citizens⁴³, should they move to another country. As a result, the children have fewer connections to Singaporean culture and people, hence there is possibly a lower degree of cultural fluidity and a higher maintenance of their homeland identity (which in part can also be attributed to the shorter duration of their stay in Singapore). The differing circumstances results in a variation of cricket participation. The last family I profile is in yet another position which corresponds to their heightened involvement in the sport. While there are differences, the core observable fact of the father as instigator, mother as supporter, and son 'naturally' taking to cricket is still evident.

The Acharya family

When I first met Mohan Kapoor, I thought that he was most passionate about cricket, because he claimed that he could miss work to watch cricket twenty-four hours a day. I came to know an even higher degree of devotion to the sport when I met the head of the Acharya household - Sandeep.

The Acharya family is a small unit made up of Sandeep, Anita and their son, Pramod. Of the three, Sandeep is the most avid follower of cricket. He, like Mohan, confesses to being able to watch cricket hour after hour without tiring. And on top of watching international matches on cable television regularly, Sandeep is also frequently found in both spectator and player capacities at local friendly as well as competitive Singapore Cricket League matches. He takes all his games very seriously, especially the important matches during which he will get his wife to digitally film him playing so that he can note his mistakes and improve his cricket playing. Cricket is such an integral part of Sandeep's life that the result of a game determines his mood. Fortunately for me, every time I met him, he had played well and was in good spirits.

⁴³ The school they attend is the United World College of South East Asia (UWCSEA). This is one of a group of ten international high schools that was set up around the world with the aim of promoting understanding between different nations through education and through the interaction of young people from across the globe. The school administers the International Baccalaureate Program which can be used as an entrance qualification for many tertiary institutions around the world.

Anita: When he wins, he'll be very happy, when he loses he gets very upset and his team members will start consoling him by saying "It's okay. It's only a game."

Like Mohan and Saurav, Sandeep 'naturally' picked cricket up at a young age. Unlike the other two however, Sandeep has distinct memories of his early cricket days, which he had shared with his wife who in turn related to me.

Anita: It's just an in-built thing. He said that when he was nine years old, he started liking cricket. And then at fourteen, he was accepted by the school team as one of the better players. And at fifteen, sixteen, he was so good that the coaches would substitute him as the student coach. When there was anything to be shown, they would call his name and say "You show this shot". He was really good.

Sandeep's playing of cricket in formal settings like his school teams was something fairly unique amongst the men I spoke with. I only knew of one other gentleman who experienced similar structured cricket playing in his youth in India and he too, takes cricket very seriously.

More often than not, Sandeep's mind seems to be on cricket. When I visited the Acharyas at their home one weekday afternoon, Sandeep called from work three times to make sure that a cricket match was being recorded properly. And upon his return in the evening, neglecting to greet anyone, he immediately sat down to watch the game.

Sandeep has not always been this pre-occupied with cricket. In fact, when he moved to Singapore twelve years ago in search of better work prospects, cricket did not play a large part in his life, primarily because he was unaware that there were pockets of people in Singapore who played the game. When he discovered this fact, things changed. Here is how Anita described it.

Anita: When he came [to Singapore], he was more involved in getting a good job. Then one fine day, we were just taking a walk along the Padang [the grounds which house the Singapore Cricket Club] and he

happened to see a game in progress. So he was interested and said “They play in Singapore?” I said they must be because I am not sure about the game. So after looking around, he went to his first cricket audition at the SRC, Singapore Recreation Club. So he did his batting and bowling and they said that he’s a very good slow bowler so he joined the team.

Being so passionate about cricket, Sandeep could not pass-up the opportunity to take part actively in the sport. His playing stint with the SRC lasted for about three or four years, after which, he joined the Ceylon Sports Club (CSC) team. The reason Anita cited for his move was due to the excessive politicking in the predominantly Northern Indian SRC squad. She did not elaborate further on this point. Currently, Sandeep plays in the CSC division two team. They practice twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday evenings, and Sundays are when they play their League matches.



[Figure 4.3] Sandeep (third from left) playing in a friendly match at the CSC (source: author)

On Sundays, Pramod and Anita always tag along and spend the day at the CSC, the place Anita describes as their “second home on Sundays”. If she is not busy filming the game, Anita will either listen to music, read, or chat with whoever is present, while supervising Pramod who does his homework. One regular piece of school work that he has to do is a written journal. Every Sunday, Pramod starts his journal with “I was at CSC...” and it got to the point where his teacher wrote a comment, asking whether he lives there, Anita told me.

After completing his homework, Pramod is allowed free reign in the club. If he manages to get money off his parents, he would be found playing on the arcade machines. If not, he would try to rope an adult (even an anthropologist sufficed on a number of occasions) who is not playing or engrossed in watching the game into helping him with his cricket practice. When neither of these options is available, he would kill the time until his father is free to play with him, by amusing himself with cricket games and drills he had invented by himself.

Pramod, aged nine, had only been playing cricket for nine months when I first spoke to him. I thoroughly enjoyed interacting with him because of his extroverted nature and his ability to answer questions with non-monosyllabic responses like most other children. In fact, he too, looked forward to being interviewed because he loves talking, which could explain why he holds the reputation for being the best speaker in his school. An interesting thing I found when talking to him was that some of his answers seemed scripted, as if he had watched one too many interviews of cricketers. The following excerpt is Pramod explaining why he plays cricket.

- Pramod: It's been my passion to play cricket.
- Yan: Why? And for how long?
- Pramod: I've been playing for nine months. It's very interesting, the game. Quite interesting. Not quite interesting, very interesting, the game.
- Yan: Why is it interesting? Is that because your dad plays it too?
- Pramod: Yes that too and because all Indians love cricket so it's a passion for all Indians.

Pramod articulated a few key points. The first is that he expressed a deep-seated zeal for a game he has only been playing for a short period of time. The second point is that his passion is fuelled by his father's enthusiasm, something that he asserts occurs 'naturally' in all Indians. Upon further discussion with his mother, I found that Pramod's passion for cricket, let alone any other sport, was non-existent until recently. Faced with a child who was a house-bound, cartoon watching, couch potato with a "very heavy body", Anita and Sandeep decided to push Pramod into a sport in an attempt to get him out of his unhealthy state. They gave him the option of either soccer or cricket. Pramod chose the latter but neither of his parents were convinced

that he would stick with the sport so they did not buy him a full cricket kit until he demonstrated a sustained genuine interest and was performing well, eight months after he started playing.

Anita: Once you teach him the stance, he will never listen to you. He's a little stubborn like that. And after a few hours, if you ask him, he'd forget about it so we thought he was not interested. But he reached a certain phase where he actually started practicing at home and we saw a change in him. He was doing the stance and practicing. After which he played very well in Kallang for one game and the coaches were praising him so on that day itself, we asked him if he was interested in the game, we'd buy a kit for you.

Anita expressed satisfaction that the use of cricket as an activity to mould their son physically and mentally worked. And now, Pramod thoroughly enjoys cricket, letting nothing get in the way him playing the game.

Anita: ... like I told you, when he has a cold, he doesn't want to go to school. We were joking with him saying "You have a cold right, then we are not going to bring you to Kallang on Saturday". He would say that he may not be entirely well but he is going to keep an alarm to wake himself up. He will definitely go.

Presently, Pramod trains at Kallang on Saturdays and plays cricket as a CCA in school. Prior to Kallang, at which he has been playing for about two months, he received formal coaching at the CSC. Pramod changed his training venue because Sandeep felt that the level of coaching at the CSC was not very professional. Calculating the time he spends on formal training, playing with his friends as well as by himself, and watching televised international matches, Pramod averages about thirteen hours of cricket a week. Another cricket activity the Acharyas used to have in their home took the form of a computer game that was introduced to Pramod by his coach. Sandeep was so taken with it that he spent more time playing it than his son. Sandeep likes cricket in any form. Similar to Ishan Kapoor, Sandeep has a cricket video collection, but his dates back to when he was thirteen years old. He is currently

in the process of converting into DVD format so that he can continue watching them for years to come.

Pramod watches a few hours of cricket a week. But this is something he only does in the company of his father. It is his father's interest in the sport that supports Pramod's while he is still learning the intricacies of the sport.

- Anita: He'll [Pramod] only watch when his father is watching a game, then he'll accompany him.
- Yan: Why don't you [Pramod] watch by yourself?
- Pramod: I don't know what they are doing that much.
- Yan: Is that because you are still learning?
- Pramod: Yah.
- Anita: Because he feels bored when he is sitting, watching by himself. If his father is there, he'll go "Good shot!", then he'll get very excited.

Within the short nine months of him picking up the sport, Pramod had accumulated a fair few cricket stories which he shared. He described how he has stopped playing in their apartment because of the commotion he had caused with balls going out the window, one landing in his father's coffee; and another landing on his pet turtle, traumatising the poor creature. He liked to illustrate with dramatic effect how he scored his first century and of how he had played superbly in various games.

Sandeep and Anita are happy that Pramod has an interest in cricket, especially in a country where the profile of the sport is extremely low.

- Anita: And at this age, if the young boys who are playing are from India, they have an interest in the game but if you are from here, there's a less chance. I am happy that he has an interest in the game.

Anita's comment highlights that being immersed in a cricket-friendly environment is critical to developing and fuelling one's interest in the game. As a first generation Singapore Indian, Anita is fully aware of the difficulty of inculcating an interest for cricket in her son, because she herself only took an interest in the game when she got engaged, to facilitate communication with Sandeep.

Anita: All my years that I went down [to India for holidays], I never picked up cricket. I picked it up after I got married. Or should I say, after engagement... you know because my husband is such a big cricket fan, I tried to know the cricket players' names so that when I was communicating with him, I can write something about it or ask him something about their playing. But when he came over and joined [the SRC], I didn't know a thing about cricket. Everyone used to clap and stand and I asked "What did he do?" And I learnt slowly, the game and the rules, and I began to enjoy it.

In an effort to create a cricket-conducive environment for her son, Anita even started playing actively. On Sundays, after Sandeep's matches are over, he coaches Pramod in the nets. Often, Anita gets roped in to facilitate his playing as Sandeep stands next to their son giving instructions, as illustrated in the images below.



[Figure 4.4] The Acharya family playing cricket together. Sandeep demonstrates a batting action (centre). Pramod (right) throws the ball to Anita (outside the frame) (source: author)

The bonding that the Acharyas achieve through cricket is unique to this family because they actively do cricket together. They set aside one and a half days a week especially for cricket; Sundays for Sandeep, and Saturday mornings for Pramod. Similarly to Sundays when Anita and Pramod tag along with Sandeep, Pramod's training at Kallang is observed by both his parents. They are the only couple I observed who show up without fail every Saturday and they make an outing of it, usually getting breakfast from the McDonald's across the road and then sitting down to watch their son train. For the duration of the morning, they occupy themselves with different things. Sandeep will pay close attention to Pramod's performance, while Anita often catches up on news by reading the paper. From time to time, if other parents are around, they would make casual conversation. Sandeep gets to do this

more frequently because the parents present are usually fellow fathers. Anita mentioned in passing that she had spoken with a couple of mothers in the past, sharing ideas on child rearing, cooking and such like, but is not able to any more because most of them adopted the practice of dropping and picking their sons up, to facilitate the running of other errands in between.

In an effort to get even more actively involved in her family's sport of choice, Anita, with much encouragement from her family, decided to join in on the girls' training. She was prompted to do so because another boy's mother, Pratibha, had started taking part regularly. And I speculate that my participation, because I am older than the girls, might have started the trend of mothers of cricketers becoming cricket players themselves. Unfortunately, Anita only lasted one session. It was not just the aches and pains that she suffered after running around for a couple of hours that put her off, but because she felt that the other girls were not receptive and welcoming. After that, she returned to being a supporter and spectator. She jokes that if they create a mothers' team, she will consider taking part again.

More so than either the Kapoor or Pillai family, cricket is a point of interest that is common to all members of the Acharya family, albeit each having their different reasons - Sandeep because it is a 'natural' Indian thing he grew up doing and excelled in; Anita because she wants to be able to connect with her husband and son as well as create an environment that supports their healthy cricketing endeavours; and Pramod because cricket is 'getting into his blood' as illustrated by his narration of the naturalising myth that cricket is the passion for all Indians. However, Pramod's adoption of cricket demonstrates that there is nothing natural about his love for the sport because his parents basically had to force it on him. To continually nurture his interest, he has to have a supportive cricketing atmosphere, one which his father provides through his intense devotion to the sport, and his mother tries her best to make it a family activity, even to the point of playing the game herself.

The Acharya family illustrates the importance of family doing cricket together, of how each individual's actions impact upon as well as are impacted upon by others. This forms the basis of the support network within the household and enables the furtherance of greater sporting achievements. But it is not simply playing cricket for

cricket's sake. Rather, it is an investment in their project of establishing and continually reinforcing their Indian identity. They do so by taking part in cricket - the layman's religion of India, which is a marginalised, elitist sport in Singapore, which effectively marks them out from local Indians and Singaporeans, thereby subconsciously strengthening and emphasizing their diasporic Indian identity in spite of their permanence in a new homeland.

Conclusion: cricketing together

Cricket is an activity of choice amongst select elite Indian diaspora in Singapore. Far from being the natural phenomenon that many participants described, the pervasiveness of the marginal sport within NRI circles in their adopted homeland is due largely to their concerted drive and effort to create a cricket-friendly atmosphere, wherein the passion for cricket thrives, and is most importantly, instilled in their children. This project of getting cricket into one's system, as demonstrated by the families I profiled in this chapter, necessitates the involvement (active or not) of every member of the family. The successful outcome of the project requires that household units do cricket together.

While there are variations in the ways that the three families do cricket, there are commonalities evident when doing comparisons between households. Starting with the head of the family, in all the cases, the father was cited as the ideological spearhead, the instigator and person who fuels the interest in the sport. As the gravitational centre of the home, his enthusiasm for the sport often rubs off on his children, reflecting the power of patriarchal influence. This results in the increased father-children bonding that the mothers are especially pleased with.

All the children described save one, Lalita Pillai, picked up the sport and ran with it. Her lack of interest however, did not stop her from performing well during her one cricket outing, the reason for which was attributed to cricket being "in the blood". While this naturalising myth is often used generically on all Indians, I found that it was more applicable to boys than girls because the latter could attribute reasons for playing (either by their own admission like Neha, or by the parents on behalf of their

child in the case of Priyanka), other than the simple pure passion or fanaticism that characterised the love of the sport that many fathers articulated. Thus, boys are found to ‘naturally’ possess cricket “in their blood” while girls attempt to get it “into their blood”.

The varied manifestations of cricket in males and females explain why fathers are prominent in their cricket involvement whereas mothers are not. This is not to say that mothers do not participate in cricket related activities. On the contrary, it is the mothers who, by performing seemingly unimportant tasks that are most often subsumed under their motherly roles and responsibilities, form the backbone of the youth cricket scene. I found that the mothers’ roles in my research paralleled that of Rayaprol’s (1997) study in Pittsburgh where women were found to be dominant in the practical tasks in the temple (a site that is a traditionally male domain – as is likewise with the cricket scene). Rayaprol’s description of the women as transmitters of culture due to their important job of reproducing is apt in portraying the NRI mothers as well.

Whilst the NRI mothers do this to facilitate their husband and children’s cricketing interests, they too stand to benefit from their involvement. An important reward is the networking opportunities with pre-filtered women who are in similar situations to one another. Cricketing involvement in Singapore is thus, about much more than the playing of the game itself. It is a key site of complex, dynamic, and fluid social interaction at three levels – individual, family and community. And the reason for its perpetuation is the web of support; the impact of one’s actions on another. And for as long as an individual stands to gain from the process, he or she will continue to invest in this project which is pivotal to the shaping of their new Indian ethnicity.

The family plays a key role as the ‘primary’ agency of socialisation (Uberoi 2003: 1081). This is evidenced amongst the NRIs, in that the family is the source of (re)producing Indianness through cricket. ‘Concerted cultivation’ of the sport in the lives of the children by the NRI parents is carried out in the desire to instil Indian identity, Indian habitus, and Indian capitals through what is thought of as a ‘natural’ Indian activity. Furthermore, specific to the Singapore context, the desire for cricket to be inculcated in their children as a form of capital is essential because it is a form

of power that gives NRIs the ability to change and control their situation and achieve their goal of distinguishing themselves as elite Indians.

In the next chapter, I look at the cricket stories the fathers told, highlighting the importance they serve for memorialising cricket in their minds. Stories, a transportable asset, are things with which Indian men can and do use to identify with one another. When they share their stories, comradeship is generated by reliving their past in the present and projecting into their future, as well as their children's.

Fathers

Their views and stories



[Figure 5.1] Cartoon by Dr. Sudeep Ross (source: www.melvindurai.com/cricket.htm)

Nirmal: My dad was different. My dad would sit quietly while all this lecturing [Nirmal being told off by his mother] was going on. He would put on the T.V. and watch it and mum would get really pissed because she said it's not that important, "You don't have to watch it, you can study" and he's sitting there watching the game. It was hardly supportive but even if you have a sort of relationship with your dad when you often don't discuss things, *cricket provides a bonding ground and forms the main priority of an Indian family* [emphasis added]. Just for your dad to explain, initially when you are growing up, how to [muffle], and then when you play against your dad and you start beating your dad in the game. Pretty much I guess what baseball does in American society. But in that sense, even if you were not on good terms and have had an argument or something, the one thing you openly disagree with, very vehemently or choose to agree and support is when an Indian cricket is going on. And just even when there's a very cold atmosphere between people, cricket sort of helps to thaw that thing. Maybe you always argue with him and then you start bitching or applauding the team together at the same time.

- Akash: I am lucky I was born in India. I am telling you. I am teaching my son [cricket]. I do spend some time. I look at my son, he runs here and there, he throws the ball, I get worried that he's going to hit somebody.
- Bharat: It's more clinical here [Singapore]. My father, we had three brothers and we used to play. That is how we started learning from very small. And in Bombay, that's another thing, you don't need a ground, we used to play on the road. So we started playing with our father there.
- Nirmal: Yah. In India, it's *a lifestyle thing* [emphasis added], and I don't think you can replicate that even if you have the most enthusiastic NRI family in Singapore. They just don't have the atmosphere.

Introduction

For diasporic peoples, stories are vital for the establishment of cultural continuity. They function as vehicles for bringing an authentic past into the present, and are thus, important in the daily project of doing diaspora (Shukla 2001). This chapter concerns fathers that I interviewed and the cricket stories they told. I found that when I interviewed a family unit together, it was the father's voice and view that dominated. Thus, this thesis is shaped largely by the fathers' interests. In this chapter, I look at the stories the fathers told and explore their dual function; the first as inculcating and nurturing a 'natural' love for cricket in their children, and the second, which also acts as a means of critiquing Singaporean society, contributing to the larger task of reproducing Indianness.

When I posed the questions, "How/when did you start playing cricket?" and "Are there any differences between playing cricket in Singapore and India?", to the fathers, I was often given replies in the form of what I call 'cricket stories' or 'cricket narratives'. These were stories men told about cricket incidents from their youth in India. One man, Nirmal, said of Indian men, "You're supposed to have incidents relating to cricket". This statement was crucial in highlighting (to me) the importance of these stories for these Indian fathers' sense of identity. It seemed to be that cricket stories are intrinsic to the identity of Indian males, especially migrants. This is because cricket is thought to be a 'natural' Indian activity and is thus a means through

which to live out Indianness. Their childhood stories function as ‘diasporic language’ that helps them retain cultural continuity amidst change by embracing images, experiences, and ideas linked to India. At the same time that diaspora seek to anchor their identity in the past, Ray (2004) also argued that doing so made the fathers modern because a characteristic of modernity is looking back. Thus looking into the past is not by any means purposeless, but, in fact, a valid and essential aspect of contemporary living and establishing one’s identity.

The choice fathers make to narrate stories about their experiences pertaining to cricket can be attributed to a number of reasons. Cricket is a prevalent and widely consumed form of ‘public culture’ in India (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995: 6), and as such, the sport is thus intimately linked to both individual and collective Indian identity. Appadurai (1995) argues that cricket acts as a vital platform on which Indians can imagine the world, construct and experience it. He suggests three reasons for the centrality of cricket to Indians. Briefly, cricket has the ability to organize national sentiment; cricket gives Indians “pleasure of agency” and lastly, significantly for ‘my’ Indian fathers, telling their cricket stories can be considered a key part of Bourdieu’s (1977) concept of ‘bodily hexis’. The concept suggests that because cricket is a deeply engaging activity for Indians, there are bodily pleasures associated with playing, or imagining playing, and telling stories about playing cricket. Of the three factors, in the case of the fathers, the combination of the first and third reason are crucial in explaining why their stories are important aspects of their efforts to reproduce Indianness in a foreign context.

The other aspect contributing to the fathers’ choice of story-telling is the status of cricket in Singapore. As detailed in chapter three, due to local historical developments, the sport bears a label as exclusive and elitist. Drawing on this, the taking up of the sport ‘naturally’ by NRIs distinguishes them as elite and, importantly, as authentic Indians.

For Indians, cricket serves as an important basis on which to create friendship bonds with fellow NRIs. This point was raised frequently, particularly by the men. Examples of this were discussed in an interview with a couple, Mohan and Rupali. The former saw cricket as a means to develop relationships. The first way of doing so he

identified was by acting as a means to bridge generational gaps outside his family, amongst his friends' children. When I asked him how cricket affects relationships, he cited an example of a friendship with a youth that changed as a result of their common interest.

Mohan: There's a friend of mine whose son [Sachin] is fourteen... Now, he started playing cricket, about seven months, eight months back, nine months back. The relationship with him and me and another friend of mine, nine months ago to now is very different because he started playing cricket with us. So he's kind of a team member now. He's fourteen and I'm forty-two but... There is a significant difference in the way we interact. There is a completely different set of discussions we can have now, which could not happen earlier because earlier, he was just a child, a friend's son but now, he is somebody that we can play with and have a different type of fun... He talks a lot of things like "I am going to bash the ball. I am going to bash the ball." It's a very different interaction that's happening. Kids don't normally talk like that... He still calls me 'uncle' but when it is about cricket, there is this... [Mohan was at a loss for words]

In Mohan's eyes, since Sachin picked up cricket, the latter went from being someone's son to being a fellow cricketer, a team mate and a person Mohan can identify with in this respect. Commenting about how it is unusual for kids to talk like Sachin does, Mohan seems to insinuate that cricket has just short of transformed Sachin into a man; a real Indian man – I would add.

Amongst the people whom Mohan identified as his friends, cricket is a commonality, something that all of them can relate to. They swap cricket stories, reminisce about the past, discuss international games, etc.

Mohan: Suppose it gives us back a common thread, which was not there a couple of years ago [prior to the introduction of the cricket channel on cable]. Even though some of my friends play cricket, either regularly or play the odd game, as far as topic of discussion is concerned, everybody plays cricket so it becomes a conversation for

SMS [mobile text messaging], over the phone, or when we meet for drinks, or whatever. There is this thing that we had missed for so many years... So I missed out on cricket for ten years, the first ten years of my stay in Singapore, we always talked about, cribbed about access of cricket on TV.

For Mohan and his friends, cricket is central to their relationships. Many of their interactions, as exemplified above, are specific to the sport. Interestingly, these cricket-loving friends of his are not people that he has become acquainted with through his son's cricket. Rather, they are more often, people he has met through work or other avenues. This is in contrast to housewives like Rupali who do not have work as a way of meeting people. For NRI mothers, their common involvement in their children's cricket is the basis for the development of friendships and is one of the primary reasons for their continual and enthusiastic participation. Unlike the fathers, cricket is incidental to the relationships the mothers form. NRI mothers seek out like companions and there is no better filter than their sons' cricket – a 'natural' Indian activity. Mohan commented on behalf of himself and his wife on their circles of friends.

Mohan: She has made more friends in that circle. I have come to know of people in that circle. Not many of my close friends are people I have come to know through my son's cricket... Because they are people in different levels in their business, and I meet them once in a while, once a month or something.

Rupali: It has become a good place to network.

Mohan: Couple of people we have become closer with, a couple of his friends, and they become much closer to us because of this cricket. But her friends that she's built up, she has much closer friends, I think... Fathers, mothers, everything!

Topics of discussion amongst the parents differ when they get together. For the mothers, who play the roles of primary facilitators for their children's cricket, their conversations relating to the sport pertain mainly to logistical, practical issues. The fathers on the other hand, hold in depth and often animated discussions about current and past cricket games as well as their own personal experiences. This chapter

concerns the latter of the two. The stories that follow are of three fathers – Mohan Kapoor, Nikhil Patel, and Sandeep Acharya. All related experiences of cricket from their youth. Mohan and Nikhil tell stories of how they started playing cricket ‘naturally’ and organically in an informal fashion with relations and neighbourhood friends. They contrasted their memories of cricket with their children’s contemporary experiences. They see the latter’s participation in training programs and competitions as overly structured and rigid on the whole, very unlike their own experiences. Because of this, fathers see their sons as missing out their kind of cricket, which is ‘real’ Indian cricket. Sandeep tells a different story, one which is more akin to the structured manner in which cricket is carried out in Singapore. Because of this, he can identify with his son’s experiences of training camps and competitions but he still has criticisms of how cricket is done in Singapore. All the fathers do. For each story the fathers tell, we can analyse his critique, some obvious and others not, of the way cricket is done, which is a reflection of the wider society. By telling their cricket stories and juxtaposing them against their sons’ experiences, fathers validate theirs as real, and as the ‘natural’ Indian way to carry out the sport, thereby reinforcing their authentic Indianness.

Mohan Kapoor

Whilst interviewing Mohan and his wife, Rupali, he clearly dominated the conversations with his many cricket stories, mostly pertaining to his childhood involvement. Mohan’s stories are typical of many fathers I met, covering a broad range of issues that emerge in many other’s narratives. This is why I chose to introduce Mohan first. There are various components to his cricket stories. The first is his organic introduction to his number one passion. The second matter he highlighted was the pivotal role of the media in two capacities – causing the explosion of the sport’s popularity in India, and the reintroduction of cricket into his life in Singapore and the impact it has had on his family (particularly his son’s). Thirdly, Mohan’s narratives illustrate the changing role of parental involvement in cricket. Last, and most importantly, I saw the great emphasis he placed on the difference between his cricket experiences to that of his children.

Mohan is the head of a household that is heavily involved in cricket. He is no exception. If he does not have to work for a living, he expressed that he would happily watch cricket round the clock. In addition to watching cricket, Mohan plays what he calls “unorganised cricket” once a week on Saturdays for a social team. The team is made up of his friends and work colleagues, all of whom are NRIs. The team hires the Indian Association grounds for the duration of the morning for \$400. The cost is split amongst the players.

Mohan attributes age as the reason for limiting his cricket playing to once a week. While cricket is his first love, golf is his second. He is spending more time with the latter now. He claims that golf is less taxing on the body and that it requires less effort to coordinate players unlike a team sport like cricket. Despite this, cricket is still Mohan’s ‘natural’ sport and number one passion because it is the Indian game. I asked him how his passion came about.

- Yan: When did you start playing cricket?
- Mohan: As boys, we grew up playing cricket.
- Yan: How young were you when you started?
- Mohan: About six years, seven years, around there.
- Yan: Was it through your friends? Or did your parents influence you?
- Mohan: No. Parents of that age were not very sports friendly, so to say.
- Yan: Did they discourage you?
- Mohan: No, they didn’t discourage me. But there was no organised centre. There is a very big difference between what she [Rupali] is doing for the kids and what I grew up with. We always had so many friends. When we go out from the house, what do we do? We play something. In India, there are people who play cricket... So that’s how everybody starts playing, you know, colony cricket⁴⁴...

Mohan, like the other fathers, had a naturalising discourse pertaining to cricket. For him, cricket was ever present in India, so there was no doubt what he would play as a child. Cricket was deemed to be in Indian blood. Thus, the sport is equated with

⁴⁴ This term was only used by Mohan. There is no definition for such a term. I take it to mean neighbourhood cricket because in the past, housing estates were divided into colonies and the term might have stuck and hence Mohan’s use of it.

Indianness. The boys (only boys are ever mentioned, reinforcing the fact that it is a male domain) would ‘naturally’ gather to play. They ‘organised’ themselves and as Mohan put it, played “colony cricket” – which were spontaneous games whereby boys in the neighbourhood would get together to play the sport.

Mohan’s description of his introduction to cricket was as something seemingly ‘organic’. He talked about the ever-presence of cricket in India, as if it had existed in the country since time immemorial (no reference was made to it being an English colonial import). The passion of Indians for the sport has however, over the course of history, changed. Mohan notes the importance of media (namely television) for cricket.

Mohan: Cricket was always popular, but it became a media thing after that [the 1983 Cricket World Cup]. Media also came in. Media itself was not present in the 60’s. T.V. itself was not there [but] cricket was still every where! We didn’t have to know what was cricket and a lot about it... It was in the newspapers. It was on the radio. That time, they still had radio commentary. So you some how will learn although you have no idea how to play... Now is no comparison. There are probably three or four channels on T.V. [in India] that just show nothing else but cricket. The media is showing cricket everywhere you go!

Rupali: Even the parents changed their focus. They will take the extra effort to take them to classes [cricket training⁴⁵].

Mohan: See, that’s because in those times, sports was not a professional career. There was no professional sport in India in the 60’s and early 70’s. So they always had a job and then they used to play the sport for the country, as a hobby, so to say. They never made real money. It’s only [when] the media started coming in, in a much bigger way, that’s when professionalism started coming in India.

The introduction of television was a pivotal point in the history of Indian cricket. Visual media played a crucial role for Indians because it is “a civilisation where

⁴⁵ There was a shift to formal cricket training amongst youth due to the professionalisation of the sport. Through structured cricket, parents aim to give their sons an upper hand in the competitive arena, should the boys demonstrate the potential to make a career out of playing cricket.

‘seeing’ (darsan) is the sacred instrument of communion” (Appadurai 1995: 35). Indians began to take cricket more seriously as demonstrated in the shift away from treating the sport as a hobby, toward professionalism, that Mohan described. Visual media was a powerful instigator of change. For the Indians in Singapore, television was also vital in igniting and fuelling their passion for cricket. Mohan, like a number of informants, talked about the introduction of the cricket channel on cable television being the turning point for his family’s life.

Mohan: Cricket for us only started in 2003... Because first of all, on T.V., they didn’t have cricket. [Prior to] 2003, you had cable but there was no cricket. So that [when the] 2003 World Cup cricket happened, that was the first time they showed cricket on cable T.V. So we took up the channel *of course* [emphasis added]. That was the first time my son saw cricket on T.V... After that, it was a *natural fanaticism* [emphasis added] that developed within that one month... I started watching because that was the first opportunity I got to watch it... I missed out on cricket for ten years. The first ten years of my stay in Singapore, we always talked about, cribbed [complained] about the access of cricket in T.V. Ten years is a long time.

Mohan bemoaned his deprivation of access to cricket on television. Thus, it was ‘natural’ “of course”, for him to jump at the first opportunity to gain televised access to the sport. Mohan’s passion for cricket, which he deemed “natural fanaticism”, undoubtedly rubbed off on his son, Arjun.

Since Arjun’s first introduction to cricket, his love for the sport has led him to play cricket on a regular basis in a variety of settings – structured training sessions at Kallang, unstructured games with his friends, as well as playing at home with his father and sister. In fact, Arjun plays more cricket than Mohan did at the same age. In spite of this, Mohan still perceives that his children are missing out on a key aspect of cricket – the form that he himself played as a child growing up in India.

Mohan: ... what they are missing is the cricket that I played. Which is, you walk down from the house, you get out of your house and you have this group of ten friends that come together and bond together,

everyday just play. Here, they play more cricket. My son plays three or four times a week. But it's structured, it's organised, it's training camps. There are things you learn when you play an unstructured form of any game. You fight and argue and do a whole lot of things. Which they have not seen that part. As long as they remain here, they will not see that part.

Mohan's comment on the lack of fighting and arguing in cricket, in Singapore, led me to relate an incident, which I had observed one Saturday morning, to him and his wife. Due to passing rain, formal coaching had ceased. As soon as the rain stopped, the boys ran into the field to play amongst themselves, unsupervised. Whilst playing, a disagreement arose between two boys. One boy pushed the other forcefully to the ground, stood on top, and slapped him. He then walked away and carried on playing. The boy on the ground picked himself up shortly afterward, brushed himself off and rejoined the others in their game. No one seemed to have noticed the incident or at least no one made any move to intervene. Mohan and Rupali responded with surprise, stating that this was an extraordinary occurrence.

- Mohan: There must be some other issue there. That will not happen because of cricket in that Kallang ground.
- Yan: Possibly because it was raining and the coaches were not around.
- Mohan: That would be it. That's the part. Because it was raining and the coaches were not around and they were playing amongst themselves or doing something...

On the one hand that Mohan talked about the need for his children to experience the 'rough' side of unorganised, 'authentic' cricket, on the other, the idea of his children actually being involved in fights like the one described above, unsettled him. Mohan had an idea (real or imagined) of cricket playing and he did not expect that in the structured setting of the SCA, that rough play would take place and that his son's safety would be at risk. Mohan further highlighted the benefits of unstructured games in terms of character development.

- Mohan: ... breaking something here and there. That's the part which these kids are missing. There are a lot of things to learn from the unstructured method of playing.
- Rupali: For example, in India, breaking a glass window or vase, it's very common. And over here, you don't get the opportunity.
- Yan: So it's good to break windows once in a while?
- Rupali: I think so.
- Mohan: Also that and you learn how to save yourself, how to get out of a tricky situation. And the lessons that come of these unstructured games... and then you play in environments which are not suitable so what happens is you, you try to adjust to that environment, you learn to play in a way that the ball doesn't go out of bounds. And they come up with creative ideas on how you can get out or how you cannot get out, one hit, one fall, something something. You need to create all sorts of things because of all the constraints. So you learn to live creatively within the constraints that are imposed on you. In a proper ground and in a structured game, there are no constraints. You bowl, bowl to a player, do some batting, then you have fielding practice and net practice and this and that.

Creativity is one benefit that Mohan draws out from his cricket experiences as a youth. Being innovative and thinking on his feet were effective social skills necessary to stay out of trouble. These characteristics are not, he says, instilled by the way his children play cricket. Mohan contrasts his own cricket experiences to that of his children's. He constructs his cricket playing as more authentic because it was played in India, in an Indian fashion. Herein lies a contradiction. While he and his children have a common phenomenon through which to bond and to be Indian - their love for cricket - the difference in their playing practices creates a division. Mohan contends that his children are missing out on his kind of unstructured cricket which is the authentic experience and an essential part of being Indian. Cricket is a site through which the fathers try to inculcate Indianness into their children, however, it is a different form because the sport is not a 'natural' activity in Singapore. This results in increased reflexivity on the part of the fathers in their approach to cricket as seen in their cricket narratives, as they contend with the differing Indianness that is inculcated in their children with the same sport carried out in a different manner.

Another difference in cricket between India and Singapore is that of the standard of play. This pertained not just to the standard at the international level but also to the playing competence that children can attain in Singapore.

- Rupali: But our children will never get to the standard of Australia, India, because it's not like football in Singapore, soccer. Every school here has soccer. Same thing in India, every school will have cricket. So the kind of competition they play, even national level competitions that are taking place. That kind of thing you can't do in a country like Singapore, Hong Kong. So we will never get to that...
- Mohan: The number of children you saw at Kallang ground, I would say, roughly, [that they make up] 30% of all the children that would be playing organized cricket in Singapore.
- Rupali: 50%.
- Mohan: That many children in any single locality in India will be playing cricket. So you can imagine the level of competition of skills that are forcing them to reach even a district team or a state team.
- Rupali: Forget about all that. To reach the school team, you have to be extremely good.
- Yan: So you're saying that until cricket gets very popular in Singapore...
- Mohan: That won't happen in our life time... The government's focus is on football, badminton...

Mohan and Rupali are taking a swipe at the standard and popularity of cricket in Singapore. They use cricket as a legitimate avenue to critique Singapore, particularly with respect to the government's rigid and structured approach to sport. Their criticisms emerge from the vantage point that their 'natural' Indian sport is not carried out in an Indian way, a form that they see as better and authentic. This serves to reinforce the Indianness of the fathers' experiences, contributing to their identity formation by validating their stories through juxtaposing them with their children's. However, seeing that cricket is a means of inculcating Indianness and a point of connection and bonding with their children, fathers cannot be overly critical.

Understanding that their experiences cannot be replicated identically due to limiting circumstances, the approach that the parents take with regards to cricket has shifted

significantly in the new context toward a concerted approach of motivation which is underlined by the idea that cricket is in the blood of Indians. Components of the fathers' concerted projects include their heightened outward demonstration of love for the game (i.e. vocalised fanaticism for cricket, participation in matches, increased amount of time spent watching the sport), increased participation, and a more hands on approach to their children's cricket (i.e. being a coach, fellow player, or a spectator at practices as well as matches), which were uncharacteristic of their own upbringing. Parents, particularly fathers, as demonstrated by Mohan, get more involved in cricket in order that they may instigate and continually fuel the 'natural' Indian passion in their children.

Nikhil Patel

Similarly to Mohan, Nikhil told many stories of his childhood cricket escapades. However, they did differ significantly in one way, in that he was able to recount details which made the stories specific to him. Despite this, a comparison of the experience of Mohan and Nikhil reveal similarities pertaining to the natural impromptu manner in which they picked up the sport as children, and their dissatisfaction with the way cricket is carried out in Singapore. Nikhil's case also serves to illustrate another important factor, which is the importance of family and community in the project of simultaneously reconstructing and reproducing Indianness through cricket in Singapore.

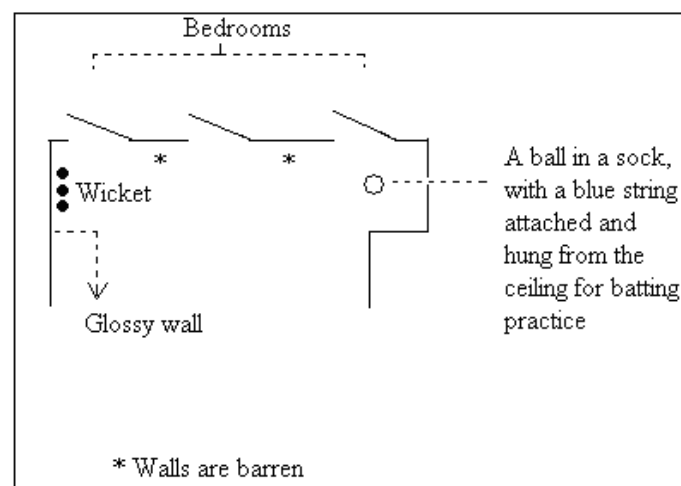
As Nikhil narrated his childhood cricket stories, I noticed his daughter, Mohini, and son, Kanak, listening intently. He spoke in an animated manner which elicited laughter from them. It was clear from this and other observations I made of the Patels, that Nikhil, in his capacity as father, is the gravitational centre of the family.

Nikhil, with his family, moved to Singapore in 1991 in search of better job prospects. Outside of work, he takes part in a number of sports like squash, badminton, golf and cricket. Nikhil plays cricket in the same social team as Mohan. In addition, he also plays once or twice a week with Kanak, below their apartment block. Nikhil commented on the odd looks that they receive when they play cricket and remarked

that if Kanak were to be kicking a football around instead, he would probably have other children wanting to join in. On occasions when Mohini and family friends come over to play cricket, they venture further to a public park. The reason for doing so is because of the restriction they feel is placed upon them on regarding the appropriate use of public space. Nikhil's wife, Asha comments on this matter.

Asha: If you want to use a certain field, you need permission. I think now they have relaxed that and certain fields are allowed to let people play without attaining permission. I think even now, if the kids were to go over to play on that field, somebody would be making a big deal.

In addition to playing cricket with his children, particularly with Kanak, Nikhil, in a similar fashion to other fathers, encourages his son's interest by equipping him with every item of cricket equipment possible (bats, wickets, pads, etc.) along with assorted cricket paraphernalia (clothing, posters, computer games, etc.). Further more, Nikhil has gone one step further and created a dedicated cricket space in their home to facilitate Kanak's practice. This saw a modification of the physical space in their living room, set up in a way that Kanak can practise bowling and batting unsupervised.



[Figure 5.2] Cricket space in the Patel apartment

Whilst allowing children to play in their homes was common amongst NRI families, modification of the physical environment to facilitate cricket playing was unique to

the Patels. Nikhil even went to the extent of painting the wicket wall with glossy paint so that ball marks would wash off easily. And to reduce the chances of damage, fragile ornaments in the vicinity of this area have been removed. When I asked Kanak whether he had caused any damage while practicing, he replied that he had not. His sister then reminded him of the time a stray ball hit the telephone, knocking it off the stand. In his defence, Nikhil commented that Kanak's skills have improved over a period of time, resulting in fewer disruptive incidents caused by stray cricket balls.

Nikhil's experiences involving cricket whilst growing up in India were a far cry from that of his son's. In stark contrast to Kanak, Nikhil described how he did not even own a cricket bat. Him and his friends resorted to improvise with a "washer man's tool". It was a tool with a little handle, and "a stout thing at the end of the pole". Not having wickets was never a problem either. They would simply draw a wicket on the wall. Then all they needed was a ball to play with. Nikhil recounted a story of his cricket experience as a youth.

Nikhil: Where I come from [in Delhi] there is a group of houses about eight to ten, followed by a circle. And there were six circles like that... Everyone had their own team. Not only one, they would have three teams. There was a large ground available. Children of my age, at that time, used not to want to get scolded so they would get out of the house, first thing in the morning. There were impromptu and ad hoc matches being played. "Hey! Your guys are available, my guys are available. Let's play!" What do we do? Take three balls. One you buy for yourself. We buy one for ourselves and one collectively, we buy. The winning team takes that ball. It used to be, in my house, there used to be ten, twenty balls at one time because the balls that were won had to be stored at somebody's place so that for the next match, you didn't have to spend anything... So it was matches and games, every time, everyday... School used to start, leave the house by around six, six fifteen. School starts at around seven thirty. Be back home by one thirty. Two thirty, three, the homework is finished and out we come till the mums come screaming to the park. "Hey! It's seven, eight! You have to sleep now!" This was a daily occurrence.

Nikhil described in detail how he and his friend organised games amongst themselves. At this point, similarities can be drawn between his story and Mohan's. Firstly, neither of them could pinpoint when or how they started, their cricket playing just came into being organically. Secondly, both of these fathers emphasized the network of friends that lived in the neighbourhood and the bonding that took place through "colony cricket". Particularly for Nikhil, cricket was a healthy pastime and a legitimate way to escape from his home. But playing cricket also caused disruption from time to time.

Nikhil: Back home when I was a child, we used to play everyday near my house. *Everyday* [emphasis added], the ball used to go across the road and break a window. The person would scream their lungs out and the kids used to scramble away and next day, the kids would be back playing again. Nobody used to complain, "You do that again, I am going to bash you!" They used to say "Okay, you broke my window". It's just the *impromptu manner* [emphasis added], the not so calculated and planned way of doing thing. Makes it work.

In this excerpt, Nikhil, like Mohan, talks about the occurrence of having to get out of sticky situations like that of breaking windows. This particular phenomenon was frequently mentioned by my male informants (fathers as well as men without children). I note it is a key cricket narrative. The broken windows story made me wonder how factual it is because, surely, windows could not be broken *everyday*. I propose that this story is part of an imaginary and fictional narrative that Shukla argued, are central to diasporas (2001: 552). The men's sharing of the same story acts to strengthen their collective Indian identity because of the commonality of their norms of childhood cricket behaviour (Davis 2002: 25). The cohesion of their stories produces a common history that impacts how Indian men can relate and identify with one another through their cricket stories, which are effectively narratives of Indianness.

By telling similar stories, the fathers create a credible critique of the present through their past. Their stories draw out what was good about their form of cricket. For example, kids just being kids getting up to mischief and the freedom and unstructured

aspect of play. The idea that the childhood cricket in India is done in an “impromptu manner” is yet another similarity between Nikhil and Mohan. Both see benefits in the “unstructured” method of playing. Nikhil also critiqued the Singapore schooling system, particularly how cricket (as well as sport in general) is organised in a regimented fashion.

Nikhil: Personally, I don't agree with how Singapore talks about its being merit based. It takes away the fun from it. They like to have, when I say they, Ministry of Education and Sports Council, they like to have sport played in a very regimented way. Teach how to play the proper way and take part in competitions. It takes the fun away from it. When it comes to playing cricket, you have proper nets and pitches and all that and proper gear and attire. At this level, it's not really required. All they need is the passion to play.

Nikhil sees this structured manner to which sport is approached in Singapore in both his children's experiences. Kanak has numerous cricket training sessions throughout the week in which most of the time are spent doing skill drills rather than playing games. Nikhil's daughter was put off joining her school's badminton team because everyone took the sport very seriously, many having attending formal coaching and taken part in various competitions for years. Fun was not the main driving force.

Badminton, along with other activities like squash and golf were Nikhil's major pastimes, in place of cricket, prior to the emergence of televised coverage of the sport during the 2003 Cricket World Cup. Only since then has Nikhil returned to playing cricket. The Patel family's (re)introduction into the sport through media mirrors that of the Kapoors. It also served as a point of connection for the two families because televised cricket matches acted as a focal point which drew them and other Indian families together. Whenever there is a major match, a number of Indian families coordinate with one another to congregate at one house to watch the game together. The reason for this is because of the atmosphere that is created when they gather. The Patel home has been such a venue on a number of occasions. When families get together, the mothers primarily occupy themselves with the organisation of the feast that always accompanies the games and the gatherings give them a chance to talk

amongst themselves. The children, depending on their gender and age, may either watch the game or play amongst themselves. And for the fathers, the cricket gatherings acted as catalysts for them to develop and nurture camaraderie through the sharing of fond memories and similar stories of cricket from their youth in India along with discussing more recent events in the cricket world. Such gatherings were described during my interview with the Patel family as a common point of vested interest for each family member.

It is the passion for cricket demonstrated by the fathers that leads to the rest of the family to be involved in the sport, whether it is the children who take part (to varying degrees), or the mothers who support their family's cricketing endeavours. Nikhil's stories map the evolution of his cricket involvement from his youth right up to his present participation. Through the pleasurable activity of sharing his childhood cricket stories with other Indian men, he effectively narrates his Indian identity into existence. It is his love for this very sport that Nikhil wants to impart on his children, particularly his son, which explains his concerted efforts in creating a 'natural' cricket friendly environment – physical (i.e. the creation of cricket space in the home), social (the gathering of cricket-lovers to fuel on another's interest) and mental (the telling of childhood cricket stories establishes the sport as the 'natural' Indian activity to participate in). All these factors contribute to cricket as an avenue for the inculcation of Indianness.

While most fathers told stories akin to Mohan and Nikhil, like that of incidents like 'broken windows' and playing with friends from the neighbourhood, I did find a two exceptions, one of whom is Sandeep Acharya. He related stories that were very different but still characteristically Indian and still critical of the way the sport is done in Singapore.

Sandeep Acharya

Sandeep's personal experiences shaped his stories and his views on cricket, making them unique to him. Taken at face value, his narratives are strikingly different from the other two fathers. However, upon further analysis, the common themes like the

natural discourse, changing parental involvement, and emphasis on the differences between his and his son's experiences are evident.

Of all the men and fathers I spoke to over the course of my fieldwork, I found Sandeep to be the most passionate and most actively involved in cricket. Saying that cricket is his life would not be far from the truth. This was exemplified by an incident I observed while at the Acharya residence. I was invited by Sandeep's wife, Anita, to watch a Bollywood movie with her and their son, Pramod. During the course of the movie, Sandeep called home three times. The first time he called to ask Anita to record a cricket match on cable. Shortly after the first call, he rang to check on the recording and to make sure that the plugs were in the right places. He called a third time to check on the score and he would have asked more about the match if he had not had to cut the conversation short because his boss was near his cubicle. When he got home, forgetting to greet his family who were watching the movie in the master bedroom, he flicked on the television set to channel 95, the cricket channel, and he was mesmerised.

Unlike Mohan and Nikhil, Sandeep's involvement in cricket extends to playing competitively. He plays for the Ceylon Sports Club (CSC) in the Singapore Cricket League. These games take place on Sundays and training for his team occurs twice a week on Wednesday and Saturday evenings for about an hour and a half. Sandeep says that participation in the League is part-time and the intensity and involvement is determined entirely by the player's interest level. Sandeep is one of the most dedicated players. This is demonstrated by the lengths he goes to, to improve his playing which includes having his wife video tape his matches so that he can analyse his performance.

Sandeep's past involvement in cricket is one of the reasons he takes the sport seriously. Unlike the stories of impromptu games played with neighbourhood friends and accidentally breaking windows related by Mohan and Nikhil, Sandeep related a more structured form of playing the game in India.

Sandeep: India is different. India is actually more professional... What they do in India is, one way of identifying whether a player is good enough to

represent the state, they would transfer him over to one of the coaching camps. They have a lot of coaching camps run by ex-test match players. So they would then coach them. They actually reside in the stadium... They live there for months on end, for maybe three to six months. And then they would get up early in the morning. I used to be there. I was selected for the under-15, to represent my state. That's in Bombay. So our coach used to bring us in, start at six and then practice a bit, run round the stadium two or three laps, do some exercises and then we used to start practice at nine. And then till eleven, stop for lunch and then begin fielding practice till three, carry on till seven and then stop again. So it was two sessions and breaks in between. So that was regular till two months.

Having been talent-spotted, Sandeep was specially chosen to be part of a coaching camp which exempted him from school for three years. This experience distinguishes him from the other Indian fathers and because it resulted in Sandeep continuing to take the sport seriously and playing in the competitive league. Unlike the other fathers who play the occasional social game, Sandeep's time and effort invested into the sport accords him a mark of respect in the cricketing circle, and he is thought of not just as a father of a boy who plays cricket or an Indian who loves cricket, but as a reputable cricketer himself. In the same manner that the other two fathers have their Indian identity reinforced by living out the concept that cricket is in Indian blood, I would argue that because of Sandeep's greater involvement during his childhood, where he quite literally lived and breathed cricket for months at a time, his single-minded focus on the sport and comparatively superior talent credits him with an even stronger sense of Indian identity. Thus, the importance of his story in shaping his approach to cricket which in turn influences his family's attitude toward and participation in the sport.

Having devoted a considerable portion of his life to cricket and having a deep-seated passion for the game, the absence of the sport from Sandeep's life was only momentary unlike the years exemplified in the cases of many fathers who have lived in Singapore for a considerable length of time. Shortly after moving to Singapore twelve years ago, Sandeep's chance stumbling upon a live cricket match alerted him to the existence of the cricket league and he dove head-first into the scene. This means that unlike the Kapoor and Patel households where the (re)introduction of the sport

after a long period of absence arose in 2003 when cricket was first televised on cable, cricket has been a staple activity in the Acharya family for a much longer time.

Despite the higher degree of exposure to cricket through an actively participating father, Sandeep's son, Pramod, had to be pushed into the sport by his parents. His mother related to me how they faced the dilemma of having a coach potato son and made him choose between either soccer or cricket to get him out of that state. He chose cricket. To start him off in the sport, Sandeep enrolled Pramod at a coaching clinic at his own cricket club, the CSC. In the first few months of Pramod's participation in cricket, uncertain of his ability to stick to the sport (or anything for that matter, as illustrated by the guitar that sits dormant on his bedroom floor – evidence of his inability to sustain long term interest in a single activity), his parents refused to buy him a cricket kit set of his own. Only after eight months of training, when Pramod began showing signs of promising talent and growing sustained interest, did Sandeep purchase him a full kit set as a reward, immediately after a training session where he had performed superbly.



[Figure 5.3] Sandeep (right) watching his son train whilst chatting with other fathers
(source: author)

Pramod continues to train every Saturday, but he does so at the Singapore Cricket Association (SCA). The reason for his shift in venue is because Sandeep is aware and wants to take advantage of the greater degree of professional coaching offered by the SCA who hire accredited instructors, many of whom come from India where they

have played competitive cricket at state, national and international levels. Furthermore, training at the SCA may increase Pramod's chances of getting into an age-grade national team like the under-13s. Currently, Pramod's cricket skill places him in the wider selection pool. Sandeep's shift in his son's training venue can be seen as a strategic move in order for Pramod to follow his father's footsteps and have similar cricket stories and experiences.

Because Sandeep's cricketing experience is more akin to the organised form of cricket in Singapore, he understands and approves of the need for structured training. Sandeep feels that teaching children the correct techniques from the beginning is extremely beneficial. Differing from Mohan and Nikhil on this point, Sandeep has no qualms about the lack of unorganised and impromptu games, and does not comment about Pramod missing out on anything pertaining to them. In fact, the only point of discontent that Sandeep expressed is the lack of professionalism and experience of the coaches which he sees will hinder the ability of the boys to reach international standards.

Sandeep: [The coaches] come here to coach because, I think they are good. They are good and the other thing is because there is a lack of good coaches here. So there is still a need for them to come. And they are good but none of them have played test match cricket. And none of them have played fifty or a hundred test matches... [They are] good enough for Singapore.

In a similar vein to Mohan, Sandeep expresses that the standard of cricket in Singapore is low and that without the expansion of interest in the sport, the standard of the game will never reach international standards. In the mean time, Sandeep has to be content with the status. When I asked him about whether he was happy that his son was involved in cricket, he expressed neutrality (this could be because he comes across as a not very expressive, but calm and collected person). He replied further by saying that as long as nobody stops him from playing, he is happy. Having his son involved just seemed to be a bonus.

The extreme degree to which Sandeep's life revolves around cricket is unique to him. Participation in the sport which effectively shaped his youth and life is his key means of acting and living out his Indian identity. For Sandeep, this is particularly important because unlike the Patel and Kapoor families, the Acharyas have decided to make Singapore their permanent home. Thus, Sandeep's invested interest in living the sport of his past in India, whether is it through playing, watching, narrating or imagining, is of vital importance to the reproduction of his family's authentic Indian identity.

Conclusion: more than a simple story

In talking to Pramod, I found evidence of cricket's efficacy in inculcating and reproducing Indianness. Although he had only been playing cricket for a short time, nine year old Pramod did a couple of things that were characteristic of all the fathers. The first is that he verbalised a naturalising cricket narrative. Below is his response to my question of why he played the sport.

Pramod: It's been my passion to play cricket... It's very interesting, the game... and because all Indians love cricket so it's a passion for all Indians.

Pramod made no reference to his parents pushing him into the sport, using it as a means to simply make him more active. Through his father's influence as well as being constantly immersed in an Indian cricketing environment, he assumed the 'in the blood' narrative. The second characteristic he adopted was that like all the cricket loving fathers, Pramod too had his own set of cricket stories. Examples included citing how neighbourhood friends challenge him to games, the achievement of his first century, stray balls landing in awkward places like his father's coffee, on their pet turtle, and even one escaping out the window. There are striking similarities between some of these stories and that of the fathers. The story of neighbourhood friends playing together in an impromptu manner echoes Mohan and Nikhil's narratives. And I cannot help but think of the similarity between Pramod's window incident and that of the 'broken window' narrative.

Returning to the comment made by Nirmal of Indian men, “You’re supposed to have incidents relating to cricket”. This statement highlights the importance of cricket stories to the construction of Indian male identity because of the sport’s intimate link to collective national identity and individual identity. Whilst the fathers’ experiences may have varied, their similarities, reflected certain norms and behaviours which are common in all stories. They all described picking up the sport instinctively. Fathers juxtaposed their experiences against their children thereby reinforcing theirs as more authentic. But at the same time, aware of the centrality of cricket to their Indian identity, they make concerted efforts to inculcate this form of Indianness into their children, even if it takes on a different form, creating a new Indian ethnicity. Simply by having cricket in the lives of the Indian diaspora, cultural continuity is established by bringing an aspect of the fathers’ past into the present. And they do this most effectively with their similar pleasurable cricket stories. This is something that their children, primarily their sons, as exemplified by Pramod, will be able to carry into his future. Within families fathers are the ideological spearheads of the idea that cricket exists ‘naturally’ in the blood of Indians and thus reproduce Indianness through continually narrating their childhood cricket stories.

The role of fathers is that of instigators and fuellers of interest in cricket in their families. Accordingly, the level of interest in the family members corresponds to the fathers. But passion for the sport alone is not enough. Someone has to see to the practicalities and facilitation of the playing of the sport. This is the role of the mothers. Although they are largely invisible in the cricket scene, in the next chapter, I explore how important their labour is for reproducing and sustaining the cricket arena, and thus reproducing Indianness.

Mothers

Their labour and rewards

Without the gift of her labour, no household can work.

Ray 2004: 129

It's good when they are young to channelise them into something which is good and healthy. The chances of them and their minds [being] trained during their teenage years is very limited. He [Vijay, her son] is so much into sports now. I don't foresee very much straying of the mind when the teenage years come. It's scary, you know, when they are teenagers, they don't communicate with you. They shut their doors and go into their rooms, and you don't know what they are thinking.

Indrakshi, a mother

Introduction

Mothers play a pivotal role in children's cricket in Singapore. Without them, this sporting institution would struggle to survive. Despite this, mothers' labour is largely unacknowledged and undervalued. In this chapter, I focus on two things. The first is what Shona Thompson (1999) calls the 'invisible labour' of the mothers. Drawing on that concept, I describe the different kinds of support that mothers provide. The second focus is on the rewards the mothers gain from their involvement in their children's cricket.

Studies have shown that the gendered division of labour within Indian households is deeply entrenched, and that migration has little effect on it (Ray 2004: 127). For Non-resident Indian mothers, it is likewise; most of them stay home. Of the seven mothers I interviewed, five are full-time home-makers and two are part-time teachers. All these women are the primary care givers for their children. For most of them, an

important part of this responsibility is conveying their children to and from school, to sporting events and extra-curricular activities, in addition to general house keeping.

While studies have been done on parents' involvement in children's sport (e.g. Dyck 1995) and children's extra-curricular activities (e.g. Lareau 2003), little research has focused specifically on the contribution of women. One such study is Shona Thompson's research on 'tennis mothers' (1999). Thompson looked into how mothers' labour facilitated competitive tennis in Perth. She found it was through their invisible domestic labour that mothers were incorporated into the institution of sport. Mothers' labour contributed to the maintenance and reproduction of sporting structures, practices and reaffirmed sport as gendered. Tasks that mothers performed to service and support tennis like chauffeuring, washing sports clothing, and cooking high carbohydrate pre-competition meals fell under the role of child care that was considered a responsibility of motherhood (Thompson 1999: 49).

In comparison to the mothers' invisible labour, Thompson found that fathers' main responsibilities were sport specific, like playing with the children. This public display of involvement in sporting activities inflated the perceived contribution of fathers to junior tennis (*ibid*: 48-50). Despite this, most mothers did not complain because they saw the sport field as a good bonding ground for fathers and their children. Tennis became part of family life and a focus for relationship building. I found this to be similar in the case of Indian families involved in cricket in Singapore.

The role of Indian mothers in facilitating cricket and to make it part of family life, has parallels to 'tennis mothers' in Thompson's study. From my data, I have created a typology of support and mothers' labour. The first I call 'quiet support', the second is 'active support', and the third is 'proactive support' because of the mothers' different levels of participation in their children's cricket. I found that I was able to categorise the mothers' support unlike the fathers' because most of the support from the latter were similar – telling 'cricket stories' and playing cricket with their children and amongst themselves.

Quiet support

Out of the six mothers I got to know and interviewed, I classify three as ‘quiet supporters’. Their form of support for their children’s cricket deviated the least from their responsibilities in maintaining a household. Examples include preparing food and drink for children to take to matches, doing the cricket laundry⁴⁶, conveying children to and from cricket practices and games, and giving moral support. I shall describe the involvement of three mothers – Chandani, Asha and Indrakshi, to exemplify what I mean by ‘quiet support’.

Chandani

I met Chandani one Sunday afternoon at the Dempsey cricket ground. She had accompanied her husband, Prem, to watch a friendly inter-club match in which their teenage son, Amar, was playing. They arrived part way through the game by taxi, a couple of hours after Amar, who had been given a ride to the grounds by his coach.

As Chandani approached the spectator pavilion, I felt that she was drawn to me (possibly because I was the only other female there). She pulled up a chair next to me and we started chatting (this was a recurring occurrence with a number of mothers). This being her first excursion to the Dempsey ground, she commented on how they had difficulty finding the place. She said that even their taxi driver was surprised that there was such a venue in such a prime commercial and residential area in the island. She expressed her amazement of the setting and location of the cricket field, that it was a stark contrast to have a ground encapsulated by forest in the middle of a ‘concrete jungle’. Other than this, other conversation topics she raised were largely not related to cricket.

Throughout the duration of the game, Chandani hardly paid any attention to the happenings on the field. The only time she voiced concern was when Amar was warming up to bat by the side-line, with his father tossing him a few balls. She suggested that he put on his protective gear. The advice went unheeded. Chandani told me that she does not like her son playing cricket because she thinks it is a

⁴⁶ Cricket whites are often bleached because they soil easily so this is a kind of specialised work.

dangerous sport. When I asked whether she had ever been involved in the game, her reply was negative, the reason being that it is a “boys’ game”. While Chandani is not entirely thrilled with Amar playing cricket, her husband, on the other hand, is very pleased with their son’s choice of sport because it was the game that he himself grew up playing. Prem is especially happy now that Amar has taken to playing cricket more seriously by receiving coaching and taking part in organised matches. Prior to this, he had played cricket in unstructured settings with his friends and father.

Whilst Prem enthusiastically and actively supports Amar’s cricketing endeavours, by not only playing with him but also cheering, Chandani sits quietly by the side-lines. It would seem that she does not encourage him, but in actuality, she does, albeit indirectly. One avenue of her support is through often packing food for Amar to take to cricket practices and games. The day I met her happened to be an exception to the norm. She related to me how Amar had gone to her bedroom in the morning to request that she prepare food for him but she refused to because she was too tired to get up. This incident was particular to Chandani because her son was older (aged fifteen) than most of the boys I had met with over the course of my fieldwork.

Another cricket related chore that Chandani’s assumed was that of washing the soiled cricket clothing. This, she felt, was part of her responsibility as a full time home maker, and had no qualms over it.

Of all the mothers, I found Chandani to be the least involved in her son’s cricket. This may reflect her personal view of the sport as being dangerous. While she may not actually discourage Amar from playing cricket, she does the least she can to encourage him. For while she may not like him participating, she values the bond created between father and son through Amar taking up cricket at a competitive level.

One of the most common tasks of mothers is to convey their children to and from cricket practices and matches. This, however, is not applicable in the case of Chandani because her family does not own a car. Further more, Amar is deemed independent and old enough to find his way around (he commutes to school via public transportation on a daily basis) which takes that aspect of responsibility off Chandani’s shoulders. In the case of families with young children, however, it is

largely the mothers who do the chauffeuring of their children, especially during the week when the fathers are at work. Asha highlighted the conveying of her son, Kanak, to and from cricket activities, as her most prominent and visible responsibility in relation to his sporting involvement.

Asha

As a working mother, Asha's involvement in her son's cricket differs from that of most home-makers. Her prime responsibility of chauffeuring Kanak to and from cricket is facilitated by her semi-flexible work hours. This occurs at least three times a week, and locations vary as he plays for his school team and the National Under-10 squad. Asha acts as the 'support crew'.

Asha: I think I am involved in everything else except the actual playing... Like making the home cricket friendly... for him [Kanak], he has cricket as a CCA at school so twice a week he stays behind and I go and pick him up after work. Whenever he needs to go to Kallang, we fetch him there.

Because of the limited time she can take off work, Asha does not often spend time watching Kanak's games like some other non-working mothers do. Her husband, Nikhil, comments about this.

Nikhil: Another side of it that most of the [cricket] mothers are either non-working or they have responsibility at home to take care of their children's CCAs. So while the fathers are away at work or pursuing their own interest, like in my case, Asha, she takes the children so she knows a couple of others who are going to watch their children. So you will normally find that because they are the ones who are taking care of the children, they participate more actively in the CCAs. While the fathers are playing their own games.

Asha's active participation in Kanak's cricket is limited. In the home setting, her support differs from Chandani. She makes no mention of the cricket related tasks that Chandani mentioned of having to prepare food or wash the cricket clothing because

the family has a live-in servant to perform these tasks. Instead, Asha focuses on creating a supportive environment to nurture the love of the sport in her children, with primary emphasis on her son. For example, she and her husband have a cricket designated area in their home to allow for Kanak to practice as and when he feels like doing so. Asha's desire is for Kanak to have a positive cricket experience. To a comment Nikhil made about how, as a youth, he used to play cricket with his neighbourhood friends until his mother would yell at him to return home, Asha had this to say.

Asha: I wouldn't mind. I don't see him doing it here. He's got to go to Kallang. To go there, we have to make plans. Anyway, when he goes there and comes back with his torn shirt and his very muddy pants, it's fine. He enjoys it.

In addition to encouraging Kanak, Asha also encourages her teenage daughter, Mohini, to get involved in cricket again (she had a short stint of active cricket participation in school for a few months until the team was disbanded due to lack of support). This suggestion came about because I mentioned that I was playing in the girls' squad at the Singapore Cricket Association. My comment elicited a number of queries from Asha as to what the training schedule is like and who is involved. Upon hearing that coaching is held on Saturday mornings, which meant a clash with Mohini's tuition class, Asha suggested that the tuition session could be shifted to another day to accommodate cricket. Mohini's reaction was not as enthusiastic as her mother's. Her primary concern was who does the coaching.

Asha: I told her to consider joining. I think you can move around your tuition to another day.

Mohini: Harsha [school mate and friend] was thinking of joining also. But your coach is Sudhir right?

Asha: Doesn't matter.

Yan: We've got Dharma.

Nikhil: Oh okay. Dharma.

Yan: He said he used to play for the Indian National Under-19. Was selected for the top 26 [throughout India]. He has a very impressive resume.

Nikhil: Yes, really good.
Yan: He's quite encouraging.
Nikhil: Both of them are good. Dharma and Vikrant.
Asha: Why don't you [Mohini] seriously think about joining?

Lastly, an indirect way of encouraging her children's involvement in the sport is by hosting social gatherings around major international cricket matches in their home. By Asha actively watching the games with her family, she demonstrates her own interest in the game, stemming not only from the playing of cricket itself, but also the positive outcomes of being involved in cricket.

In the case of most cricket mothers, their interest and involvement in the sport arose as a result of their children, primarily their sons. Each sees benefits of participation in cricket. Indrakshi, the third mother, whose form of support I also define as 'quiet', gives a different perspective, highlighting the impact of the ups and downs of her son's cricket in their family's life.

Indrakshi

Mothers whom I class as 'quiet supporters' characteristically attend their children's cricket matches and practices infrequently. Indrakshi is no different. However, unlike Chandani and Asha, both of whom got involved in cricket because of their children, Indrakshi's interest in the sport extends back to her own youth. She spoke of a background that is somewhat akin to that of the fathers. Her love for the game developed as a result of growing up watching cricket with her father. This led her to play cricket throughout her school and college years. After completing her formal education however, due to work and family commitments, she stopped playing. She expressed that she would love to play cricket again. I described to her how a couple of mothers had started playing in the girls' squad on Saturdays and invited her to join us. She did intend to make it to a session, but did not manage to because she had over-exerted herself on the tennis court the day prior.

Though Indrakshi differed from other mothers in a number of ways relating to her personal involvement in cricket, like the two mothers described above, her current support is limited largely to the home.

Indrakshi: I am not so actively involved. I give him support at home but I am not very actively involved outside because I have some home commitments as well.

Indrakshi is a full-time home-maker and a mother of two, Vijay and Kavita. Vijay, aged eleven, is the only person in the family who is actively involved in cricket. He plays for both his school team as well as in the National Under-13 squad. Indrakshi described Vijay as a talented sports person, one capable of picking up any sport with ease. However, he is limited to one sport by his parents. The reason behind this is that they want him to concentrate and excel in one thing. When Vijay chose cricket over soccer, Indrakshi and her husband, both avid cricket followers, were very pleased.

Unlike Vijay, Indrakshi's younger child, Kavita, has not taken to cricket as passionately. She is described as being an "indoors person", who only watches the game when the rest of the family is. And at times, she does get "a little fed up" with cricket. Thus for Indrakshi, she has to adopt a balancing act between the interests of her children. Sundays, which are allocated for the children to do what they enjoy, Vijay chooses to play cricket whilst Kavita attends art class. Often on Sundays, the entire family will go to the cricket grounds to watch Vijay play. Part way through the match, Indrakshi will take Kavita to art class, leaving her husband behind as he often gets involved with umpiring, scoring, coaching or simply giving moral support.

Indrakshi highlighted that a prevalent form of support that she gives her son is verbal encouragement. Much conversation in their household revolves around cricket. It acts as an avenue for effective communication in this family (Indrakshi also commented that it helped facilitate conversations with relatives, friends and even strangers when Vijay holidayed in India.) An example given of this is how Vijay would often return home with trophies won from cricket tournaments and exclaim, "Mom! It's increased!" (referring to an increase of his cricket trophy collection).

Whilst Indrakshi is extremely proud of her son's achievements in the cricketing scene, and pleased about the benefits of character development through the sport, she is wary of him putting too much time and effort into it at the expense of his studies, because she thinks that specialising in sport as a career path is risky. Her ambition for Vijay is to gain entry into an elite boys' school on the basis of a combination of his academic results and cricket CCA. Here, Indrakshi demonstrates the tangible use of cricket within the Singapore schooling system to give her son a competitive edge.

On the whole, Indrakshi has a positive outlook on her son's cricket involvement. However, she did point out that there are times when Vijay is overly pre-occupied with cricket and neglects school work. In these instances, she uses cricket as a disciplinary tool, threatening to withdraw his cricket privileges unless he gets his work done.

Indrakshi: I think that it's had a negative and a positive impact in the sense that there has been a lot of stress also in the sense that some times if he is not able to manage things, we're like "Stop your cricket now! Concentrate! If you don't, we are going to make you stop cricket." We've actually come up with strategies like that because the pressure of education is very high. But it's all worked out. Definitely.

For all the quietly supportive mothers, their contribution lies largely in their homes and deviates little from their 'normal' motherly tasks. By doing seemingly minor tasks ranging from conveying their children to and from cricket, preparing food and drink, washing the cricket whites, giving verbal encouragement, allowing their children to play cricket at home, sitting by the side-line of the occasional cricket match, watching cricket at home together, these mothers help create an environment that is conducive for cricket. They do so primarily because of the benefits their children stand to gain, whether it is character building, bonding between father and children, use of cricket as educational capital, and even being able to relate to other Indians. Mothers in this category have little public exposure which is why their labour, despite being an essential part in facilitating the cricket scene, is largely unnoticed and 'invisible'.

Active support

In addition to performing all the ‘invisible’ tasks that ‘quiet support’ mothers undertake, mothers I classify as ‘active supporters’ do two additional things. One is that they attend their children’s games and practices on a regular basis. The other is that they actively play cricket. A combination of these two aspects gives mothers in this category that ‘active’ characteristic and they stand out in the cricket scene as a result. Two mothers, Anita and Pratibha, whom I met and played cricket with over the course of my fieldwork, exemplify this form of support.

Anita

Every Saturday morning without fail, over the course of my three months of fieldwork, I saw Anita with her husband, Sandeep, at the Singapore Cricket Association. When I first started making observations, I noted that Anita was a passive spectator. She and Sandeep often ate breakfast bought from the McDonald’s across the road while watching their son, Pramod, play. After they had finished eating, Anita would either read the newspapers or a book while Sandeep simultaneously conversed with other fathers present and observed his son playing.



[Figure 6.1] Mothers reading the papers during their sons’ training (source: author)

A few weeks into my observations, Anita stopped me as I was leaving the cricket club, to inform me that she was going to join in the training with the girls the

following Saturday. I thought this was great as the squad needed more people to make up numbers to form a full team and that the girls would react positively to the introduction of a new person.

A number of factors led to Anita's decision to participate. Firstly, she felt left-out and bored as a spectator whilst both her husband and son were pre-occupied. Secondly, she wanted to get more actively involved in the consuming passion of the members of her nuclear family. Thirdly, Pramod and Sandeep had been encouraging her to play with the girls, especially since another mother, Pratibha, had started participating.

The following Saturday, whilst waiting under the spectator pavilion for training to start, Anita introduced herself to the girls. They did not receive her enthusiastically as I had. Early on into the session, during the warm-up, as we ran around the field, Anita told me that she felt unwelcome. Following this, a combination of her poor performance during the training and lack of encouragement and interaction from the other girls put her off participating again. The next Saturday, when the girls saw her, they asked me why 'my friend' was not playing. I related the first excuse Anita gave me, that she suffered pain in her leg from the previous week. Later, she further restated that it was because she did not feel comfortable playing with the girls. Despite the encouragement that she received from her husband and son to continue playing, she was content to return to status of a spectator. She said jokingly that if ever a 'mothers' team' is formed, only then will she consider playing in a team again.

This experience may have put Anita off playing with the team but it did not stop her from continuing to play with her family at the Ceylon Sports Club. Known to them as their second home, this family spends their Sundays there because Sandeep plays matches on the grounds in the mornings. If the game is an important one, Anita will be kept busy, recording it. Otherwise, she would read or listen to music. When Sandeep's matches are over, following a short rest, he coaches Pramod in the nets. To facilitate this father son practice, Anita is roped in to either bat or bowl, as Sandeep stands beside Pramod to give him instructions. Anita obliges every time because she values it as a healthy family activity. And while Pramod gets to work on his cricket skills, so too does Anita. This is something that she is working on because Sandeep makes fun of her cricket playing. She described to me how he likens her bowling to

Bhangra - an Indian folk dance originating from the Punjab region. And another time when he made the comment “Looks like Sonia Mirza [an upcoming Indian tennis star] has left the tennis court and come in the cricket field.” He was likening Anita to Sonia Mirza in terms of them both being fish out of water.



[Figure 6.2] Anita bowling to Pramod with Sandeep coaching (source: author)

Despite all the light-hearted joking, Anita’s contribution to the family’s enjoyment of cricket is pivotal. During an interview, she commented that she was happy to tag along and play a supportive role. One reason was that by doing so, she would not be left out. And the second was to fulfil her responsibility as a good mother through prioritising her family’s interest ahead of hers. By being present at Pramod’s practices and Sandeep’s matches, she reinforces the importance of the family unit by bonding over a common thing - cricket.

Pratibha

While the extent of Anita’s cricket support is largely concentrated on her own family, Pratibha’s ‘active support’ impacts the wider cricket ‘community’. Her active involvement affects the dynamics and running of the children’s cricket scene. As a result, she is a key figure, known and trusted by parents and children alike. I would describe her as a ‘surrogate cricket mother’.

Pratibha is a full time home-maker and mother of three children, two boys and one girl. All of them train at the Singapore Cricket Association on Saturday mornings. For this reason, she drives the children there and stays for the entire duration of their coaching session. When I was initially introduced to Pratibha, she had not ventured out of the spectator stand into the playing field. During training, she would either read a book, watch the children play, or talk to parents, coaches and cricket facilitators. Then when the children come to the pavilion for breaks, Pratibha would stop whatever she was doing to make sure that her children got enough to drink and eat. She would also talk to them to see how they are feeling and how the training is progressing. In addition to taking care of her children's needs, Pratibha also looks out for the children whose parents are not present. For example, in one incident, she gave a child money to purchase a drink from the vending machine. Most of the time, she offers words of encouragement to the many young cricketers whose parents are not present, giving their morale a boost.

On the Sundays, whenever her sons play matches at Dempsey, Pratibha's role as 'surrogate cricket mother' is accentuated. One way is the responsibility of car pooling. She would often provide transport for some boys who live along the route to the grounds. An important role she takes on is as an unofficial point of contact for parents. For example, when it rains, parents call her up to check if the game is still going to take place. In a unique incident, a parent called her up to enquire whether a match was being held because due to miscommunication, the parent and child were waiting at the wrong venue.

Comparatively fewer people show up to matches at Dempsey. There are usually only a handful of parents who stay on to watch the game. Most of them are fathers. Pratibha assumes the responsibility of looking after the players. One way she does this is by supplying fruit and drinks. When I was there, noting that I was only observing the game, she would get me to cut up oranges for the boys while she busied herself with other aspects of facilitating the smooth running of the event like scoring, giving advice to players and also acting as a cheer leader.

While her primary goal is to support the children by enabling a positive experience, Prahtibha also noted that an important aspect was to keep the egos of the boys in

check. As a father, Gopan, pointed out to me whilst we walked behind a couple of boys who belong to the National Under-13 squad, that they have a particular swagger and an inflated sense of importance. He says that at friendly games, they must always wear their team gear, like caps and shirts, to differentiate themselves from the other players. He highlighted this as a problem amongst accomplished cricket players. To bring the boys down to earth, what the parents do after the match is to pit their skills against the boys in a short game. Many a time, the parents win, deflating the boys' egos. Prahtibha, often the only mother who takes part, told me of how she managed to score a good number of runs once, a phenomenon that surprised the boys.

A few weeks into my participant observation amongst the girls on Saturday morning, Prahtibha and her sister-in-law, Jayanti, decided to join in. I felt that my participation triggered the trend of mothers playing with the girls. Since then, Pratibha has become a regular participant while Jayanti only attended one session. A couple of reasons are given for her one-off participation. One is that Jayanti does not often stay after dropping her son off at cricket. The second is that she felt out of place because of her low level of fitness compared to the girls. This was demonstrated during a game where she yelled to her batting partner to stop running between the wickets because she was tired.

Pratibha fared well in her first session and continues to play as long as her sons attend training. She is a keen player who possesses extensive knowledge about cricket. This however, does not translate well onto field. She excels at taking catches and fielding but her batting and bowling skills leave much to be desired. But her greatest contribution to the team cannot be measured according to her playing, instead, it is her enthusiasm expressed through her expressions, actions, humour, advice and cheering that are important. This is a huge contrast to her shy, quiet daughter who is also in the squad.

Pratibha and Anita both demonstrate 'active support' in that they both play cricket and are regular fixtures at their children's games. However, their degree and motivations of involvement differ. For Anita, she is focused more on the benefits for her family. For Pratibha, her focus may have initially been on her own children, but over time, she has become involved unofficially in the running of children's cricket,

to the extent that she has become a ‘surrogate cricket mother’ by looking out for the interests of all the children.

Proactive support

The final category of mothers’ support is ‘proactive’. A defining characteristic of this is that they go beyond the essential motherly duties, as demonstrated by ‘quiet’ and ‘active’ support mothers, to consciously create an environment that is conducive for children’s cricket. This is done is an officially acknowledged capacity and is exemplified by one mother, Rupali.

Rupali

Rupali is a key figure in children’s cricket because of the innovations that she has introduced. Her involvement in the cricket scene stems from her son, Arjun’s interest. She explained the evolution of her support from being ‘quiet’ to ‘proactive’.

Rupali: I wasn’t interested in cricket... not until I had children. Not till my son was interested in cricket... only because of my son. I used to take him for training. And some how, I met Mr. Singh and we started off. And then interest came. And when my son went to Planet [Primary School], there was no cricket there. But there were quite a few kids interested in cricket. Our principal is extremely good so she said “Go!”

Due to her initiatives of introducing cricket and also Hindi as a mother tongue into Planet Primary, Rupali is the person in charge for both activities. Furthermore, her participation in Arjun’s school extends to helping to run holiday camps with other Indian mothers. The annual event, and by far her most significant endeavour, is organising an annual boys’ cricket tournament.

‘Stumped 05’ was the second inter-school cricket tournament of its kind for which Rupali headed up the organising committee. The event set out to achieve two aims. One was to bring various teams together to play, as there are few such opportunities.

The other aim was to raise funds for Planet Primary School's cricket program. Aided by an organising committee, made up solidly of Indian house wives, friends whom Rupali roped in to help out, they managed to pull the event off successfully.

The organisation of the tournament was no small feat. With the exception of the set up of the playing fields (this was done courtesy of Mr. Singh and the Indian Association), the mothers were responsible for every other aspect. Prior to the day itself, there was logistical planning to be done. They had to notify and invite teams as well as parents, make arrangements for the trophies, devise a competition schedule, organise umpires⁴⁷, and there was food and drink preparation⁴⁸ to coordinate.



[Figure 6.3] Warming-up (source: author)

On the day, Rupali was frantically running around making sure everything was in order and ran smoothly. The six-a-side tournament saw the participation of eight teams⁴⁹. There were between fifty to sixty players who started to arrive at the grounds by eight o'clock for the tournament that officially commenced at nine. In addition to the players, there was a whole array of supporters (passive and active) - mothers, fathers, siblings, uncles, aunts, grandparents, friends and coaches. Everyone fit into

⁴⁷ They invited qualified umpires to oversee the games.

⁴⁸ There were three aspects to this. One was the individual bundles of food given to each child. These were made up mainly of nibbles. The second was the need for a constant supply of drinks for the children. Part way through the day, they ran out so a father went to the nearest supermarket to replenish the supply. The third aspect of sustenance provision was a catered buffet lunch that was organized primarily for the Naval Base players, parents and organizers.

⁴⁹ There was a mixture of school and club teams.

one category or another. No one expected someone to be there to simply observe. Hence the question “Is your son playing?” was posed to me four times.



[Figure 6.4] Match taking place at Stumped '05 (source: author)



[Figure 6.5] Registration: the pre-tournament atmosphere (source: author)

Initially when the matches started, the core group of supporters - the mothers and fathers - were very attentive. Whilst standing on the boundaries, they cheered for their children and followed their son's team to the field on which they were playing. Some mothers even took photographs.



[Figure 6.6] Spectators (source: author)



[Figure 6.7] At the start – attentive mothers (source: author)

As the day wore on however, the interest level of the parents changed. The fathers got more involved. They took up active coaching and counselling roles. One father I spoke to at the start of the day had planned to simply drop his son off and then go to work, but by lunch time, I saw that he was still present, had rolled up his sleeves, and was actively mentoring his son's team.

Mothers on the other hand, gradually lost interest in the game. Whilst they did not become entirely disconnected, they instead started to reconnect with friends, make new acquaintances, and worry about whether their sons were getting enough to eat and drink. By the end of the day, even Rupali's attention was not focused on the games.



[Figure 6.8] Father and observer turned coach (source: author)

Overall, the tournament was a success. Most people were happy with the outcome of the day. During the prize giving ceremony, the principal of Planet Primary School, acknowledged and thanked Rupali for her hard work and dedication to the running of an event, done primarily with her son Arjun in mind.



[Figure 6.9] Prize-giving (source: author)

Rupali's 'proactive support' has paid off. Stemming from her desire to create a conducive cricket environment for her son, she has effectively transformed the children's cricket scene, and gained public prominence in the process. Whilst all Indian mothers support their children's cricket, some do so more visibly than others. It is evident that the more visible their support, the more the rewards they themselves gain.

A rewarding endeavour

Mothers stand to gain rewards through their involvement in children's sport (Thompson 1999: 186). When asked, "What are the benefits of cricket for your children?", mothers claim things like building self-esteem and confidence, teaching sportsmanship and team work, nurturing responsibility and civic consciousness, preparing them for the challenges that await them in the future, diligence, and improving their health and fitness. Like Thompson's 'tennis mothers', mothers emphasize that the rewards of cricket are for their children. A tangible reward they confess to is the use of cricket as a form of capital to gain entry into elite schools (to be expanded on in chapter seven).

Non-resident Indian mothers themselves benefit directly from supporting their children's cricket. Firstly, it helps keep their families together and allows the development of stronger ties through a healthy focal activity in which everyone is involved, albeit to varying degrees. This is demonstrated in the families of mothers described earlier like Chandani, Asha, Indrakshi and Anita. Especially for the boys, the mothers were happy that they followed in their father's footsteps so that they share a common interest, as this makes the father more involved in his children's lives. Otherwise, fathers would have very little involvement in their children's lives. Lareau's (2002) study of the roles of fathers and mothers involvement in the daily lives of their children showed that fathers did not know much of the detail of their children's lives, and that mothers were the ones who provided the day-to-day care. Despite this however, fathers still demonstrated strong connections to their children because the fathers were sources of entertainment, centre of conversations, and teachers of life skills (2001: 32). This is demonstrated by all three fathers in the previous chapter.

Secondly, involvement in cricket has a specific benefit to mothers, in that it acts as a social outlet for them as explained by Asha.

Asha: I think it is treated as a social event. Rather than just a game. Even some parents are there at normal practice. But like for a tournament yesterday [Stumped '05], mothers would come in with their packed lunches or snacks and just cheer their kids on.

The use of cricket games or practices by mothers to connect with one another and the larger world outside their homes is crucial. It gives them a place to network with people who are in similar situations to them (i.e. expatriate Indian mothers, most of whom are home-makers, who have children and husbands who enjoy cricket). The context has effectively filtered out mothers who are dissimilar to them and when they get together, they reinforce what it means to be a good Indian mother (i.e. being present to support their son's cricket endeavours, looking after their children's physical and emotional well-being). This differs from parenting practice in India, in the past, where parents do not frequent or make a big deal out of their son's daily cricket matches. Arguably, there is no need to do so because there are other outlets for networking with like-minded people in India, something not common in Singapore and thus an opportunity ceased by mothers for their personal benefit. Kurotani's study of Japanese corporate wives in America identifies three functions of the homosocial community of women which are also relevant to the Indian mothers. The first function is that it provides a source of friendship, support and advice. The second is that it is a chance for play (although limited) away from domestic responsibilities. The third is that of its use as a disciplining mechanism, reinforcing what it means to be a good wife and wise mother (2005: 147). To be a good mother is to be defined by the success of their children – in school, on the cricket field, etc., to see to their development as healthy, holistic and flourishing individuals. Herein lies the greatest social reward for their investment in their mothering duties.

Conclusion: being a 'good' Indian mother

According to Thompson, the greatest reward for 'tennis mothers' relates to successful mothering which is measurable by the quality of the adult the child becomes (1995: 187). Such mothering or moulding, which Lareau (2003) calls 'concerted cultivation', of a child lies primarily in the hands of the mother. An extreme case of this is that of mothering in Japan, where mothers who are devoted to the promoting of the educational success of their children, especially that of sons, are dubbed *kyoiku mama*, literally translated as 'education mother' (Allison 2000: 106). Unlike the 'tennis mothers' in Australia and 'education mothers' in Japan, the Indian mothers in Singapore have one more component to contend with – diaspora, and high value is

placed on the retention of one's culture. This is seen in Kurotani's ethnography where she describes the primary job of middle-class Japanese house wives was to "create a bubble of Japaneseness in the middle of foreignness" (2005: 12). An avenue through which Non-resident Indian mothers do this is by being 'cricket mothers'. They provide the practical support to facilitate cricket for their families and meet the physiological and emotional needs of their children, immersing them in Indian dominated environments. In turn, mothers are rewarded with a support network for themselves although they are reluctant to acknowledge this, referring to their children's rewards first. The mothers' labour lays the foundation stones which allows the development of a closer bond between father and children which leads to the fathers' gain of accolades as their involvement in children's cricket is more visible. The role both parents play with regards to cricket is crucial and complementary in nurturing their children to become successful and 'authentic' Indians. Their respective functions fit into the Indian mode of thinking of the ubiquitous South Asian procreative 'seed and earth' metaphor (Leela Dube 1986 cited in Uberoi 2003: 1074), that the father (male) is seen as the active principle, the provider of the 'seed' of their child's future identity (which in this case is cricket that is central to the reproduction of Indianness), while the mother (female) is the passive 'field' in which the seed is sown and nurtured through her support (Misri 1985 in Uberoi 2003: 1074). While these parents invest just as much into the projects of 'concerted cultivation' in their children, they differ from the ones in Lareau's (2003) study because Indians focus primarily on one activity, in an effort to (re)produce Indianness for all parties involved, particularly that of the children. In the next chapter, I look at how the combined effort of the parents has shaped the cricket arena in which their children participate.

Children

Playing Indianness

Introduction

The ultimate goal of the diasporic NRI parents is to inculcate Indianness in their children. Their prime method of achieving this is by living out the idea that cricket is ‘in the blood’. This however, is far from natural in the non-cricket friendly Singapore environment. The reproduction of the cricket-centred lifestyle necessitates a combination of the differing roles of the fathers and mothers. Their investment of time, energy and resources into the sport is significant, and the success of their endeavour is reflected in their children’s attitude toward and adoption of cricket. In this final ethnographic chapter, I describe the experiences and views of the children and the parents on their youths’ participation in the sport. The division of the chapter into two sections; the first concerns the boys, and the second the girls, serves to highlight the gendered inculcation of Indianness. The major theme that emerges is cricket as a site of instilling Indian identity. However, due to transnational and transcultural movements, it is not a simple matter of reproducing Indianness because of the changes and challenges that arise. What results is the creation of a new diasporic Indian ethnicity amongst NRI children.

There are very few major works within the field of anthropology that focus specifically on children. As Hirschfeld points out in his paper aptly titled ‘Why don’t anthropologists like children?’, the lack of such literature is curious given that “virtually all contemporary anthropology is based on the premise that culture is learned, not inherited” (2001: 611). He attributes two reasons to the lack of child-focused literature. The first is due to the view of cultural learning that overestimates the role of adults and underestimates the contribution of children to cultural reproduction. The second is the perceived lack of scope for children’s culture to shape adult culture (Hirschfeld 2001: 611). These stem from the idea that children are

“passive subjects of structural determinants” (James and Prout 1990: 4). Mindsets in academia have shifted in recent years to now view children as possessors of active agency and they “must be seen as actively involved in the construction of their own social lives, the lives of those around them and of the societies in which they live” (*ibid*). While I agree with this view, admittedly, I found collecting first hand data about the younger children’s experiences and opinions very difficult because of their often short or monosyllabic answers to my probing questions. This made the ascertainment of understanding as to how they constructed their own social lives difficult. Because of this, information about the cricketing exploits of many of my younger participants, most of whom were boys under the age of twelve, came from their respective parents. The situation I faced with the girls was different. With the exception of two girls, the rest I met were teenagers. Their physical and mental maturity meant that they were more articulate and reflexive, and I was able to elicit their opinions and experiences more easily. Further more, I spent a lot more time with the girls through participating along side them in their training sessions at the Singapore Cricket Association. This is why this chapter has a heavier emphasis on the migrant girls.

The centrality of children as valued members of families was highlighted in a study on transnational childhoods by Orellana, Thorne, Chee and Lan (2001). They found that children are pivotal to migratory processes and that the decisions made by adults were dependent upon the welfare of their children. When families embark upon the crossing of geographic boundaries, they enter into ‘transnational social fields’ which are “multi-stranded social relations that link places of origin and settlement” (Basch, Glick-Schilier and Blanc 1994, cited in Orellana, Thorne, Chee and Lan 2001: 573). For many migrants, transnational practices become a habitual part of life.

In addition to their movement, particularly for adults, an assertion of their past is essential to the establishment of their identity. In the cases of migrant families, Anderson argues that “what a parent brings from [their] embodied past informs much (though not all) of what the child experiences in its present” (1999: 22). Migration results in transnational, and more importantly, transcultural movements. Children, as participative agents, engage with “those cultural models of childhood from which they make their own pragmatic and hybridized choices” (Anderson 1999: 14). Due to

cultural fluidity, the offspring of migrants acquire an identity that reflects integrated cultural multiplicity. This gives them a unique identity and symbolic capital which allows for further creolization and global flexibility in adaptability.

Migrant children possess a unique hybridized identity which is just as beneficial to them as it is to their parents in two respects. One, it can help with their parents' assimilation and settlement and two, it can help parents stay connected with their homelands (Orellana, Thorne, Chee and Lan 2001: 588). In the case of NRIs, this point of connection which the children have inherited is cricket. The effectiveness of the sport's ability to reproduce and (re)construct Indianness lies in the exclusivity of cricket's 'social space' (Sibley 1995). According to Shields (1991, cited in Sibley 1995), social space raises questions of belonging and how the self and others are perceived. Children locate and identify themselves in social space according to their feelings of belonging that are based on interactions with people, places, and objects. All these components are what children relate to and develop a sense of self. The rest of the chapter explores these factors and the dialectic interactions between them and the children as they go about acquiring cricket as a complex form of Bourdieu's notion of capital. I start by exploring cricket in the lives of boys by looking at the various forms the sport takes in their lives.

Boys' cricket

Boys' cricket takes place in a number of different locations and in a variety of forms. The forms range from regular formal structured training sessions, to organised inter-club and/or inter-school competitions, to the daily informal games played at home or in their neighbourhood with friends and family. For many of the boys, the way their cricket involvement is portrayed, it would not be far from the truth to say that their lives revolve around the sport. For the boys and their parents, a fair bit rides upon the boys' participation and success in cricket.

Informal cricket

Informal games, the form of playing with which many fathers most easily identified with, are steady fixtures in lives of the boys. They take place namely in three locations – homes, neighbourhoods, and schools. The boys' fellow players include friends, family members, and in one case, even the household servant. It is in the Patel family that sees Kanak occasionally persuading their servant, Annie, to accompany him to the deck below their apartment, to bowl him a ball or two. This is his alternative to practicing in his cricket alley set-up at home when there is no one else around for him to play with. Two or three times a week, his father, Nikhil, will set aside time to play with his son under their apartment. If they are joined by friends, and very sporadically Nikhil's daughter, Mohini, they may venture further to an open field across the road from their residence. Kanak's informal cricket playing is largely unplanned.

As contradictory as it may sound, unlike Kanak's informal and impromptu cricket, the form that manifests in the Kapoor household is a little more structured. Informal cricket is a daily occurrence for the Kapoors. It often starts early in the day at school, with Arjun and his friends organising themselves to play short games during their recess time. In the evenings, these same boys who all live in close proximity of one another, will gather at an empty ground and play for between one to two hours. When Arjun gets home, he patiently awaits his father's return from work for even more cricket time with his sister as his opponent and father acting as the umpire. Mohan sits in the designated umpire seat at one end of the lounge scoring and regulating their play as his children take it in turn to bat and bowl to one another. Such play lasts for any where between half an hour to one and a half hours.

The third example of informal play I observed that was similar to the Kapoor case in that it involved the family members playing cricket together was the Acharyas. Every Sunday, without fail, would find this household at the Ceylon Sports Club. While Sandeep is taking part in the match, his son, Pramod, may busy himself with his self-devised cricket games or the odd 'uncle' will give him a little coaching. But the thing that Pramod looks forward with much anticipation is the opportunity he gets to play with his father. After the match is over, Pramod will relentlessly ask that his

exhausted father to take him to the nets immediately. After a short rest, Sandeep succumbs to Pramod's request and escorts him and his wife to the nets. Father and son pair up with Sandeep instructing Pramod on the correct technique while Anita stands across from them, occupied with either bowling or fielding balls.

Informal cricket serves a number of important purposes. Firstly, it is a means of introducing the sport to the boys. Playing in a relaxed environment with friends and family nurtures their interest in the game. Secondly, informal cricket serves to equip the boys with the basic skills which lead to take the next step of participating in formal cricket training. Thirdly, and I think most importantly, the boys' informal cricket is an essential part of the reproduction of Indianness because, as I argued in chapter five, it is these informal experiences that will create stories which echo their fathers', and this will ultimately lead to a continuation of the tradition of narrating cricket stories in the project of reproducing Indian identity.

The form of Indianness that is produced is unique to the circumstances of the boys. This can be attributed to their transnational movement and transcultural interaction. These result in practices being modified and they adopt distinctly transcultural characteristics. This is the case for cricket in Singapore where the sport has taken on a distinctly formal flavour at all levels, starting at a tender age with the boys.

Formal cricket

There are two major areas that I identify as formal cricket for boys. One pertains to their training and the other that is closely linked to the first, is competitions. I used the latter (i.e. Stumped '05 and inter-club matches at the Dempsey cricket ground) in the previous chapters, to illustrate the contributions and rewards for the mothers' invisible labour. In this section, I focus on the boys' major formal training site – the Singapore Cricket Association.

While there is an array of training venues for boys' cricket – ranging from extra-curricular sessions in school, to social clubs (i.e. Ceylon Sports Club) offering cricket coaching, the Singapore Cricket Association (SCA) is the major training venue

because it is the professional governing body for the sport in the country. The SCA's grounds at Kallang turn into a coaching site for children and youth on weekend mornings. The Saturday morning sessions were the primary ones I observed and participated in because Sundays were the days on which I primarily attended men's and boys' cricket matches. I did manage to make observations at one Sunday boys' training and will describe them later as I see them as vital to bridging the gap between informal and formal playing.

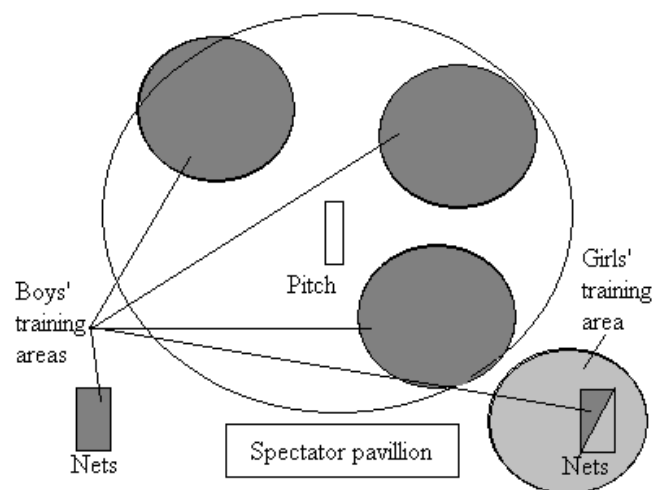
Training at the SCA on Saturdays takes place between 8 and 10am. The boys start arriving at the grounds up to fifteen minutes before their session. Most are dropped off at the main gates by their parents. They come fully decked out in their cricket whites with their huge kit bags in tow. It never failed to amuse me how some of the boys dwindled in stature compared to the enormous bags they carried. Upon their arrival, the boys would spontaneously play amongst themselves until the formal training commences.



[Figure 7.1] Boys playing at the SCA (source: author)

Approximately fifty to sixty boys gather at the SCA on Saturdays. The majority of them are of Indian descent. The handful of non-Indians is made up mostly of other South Asians like Sri Lankans. The one token boy who does not fit into either of the previous categories is Eurasian (father is a Chinese from Hong Kong and his mother is English but they lived together in UK for numerous years). Because this training session is targeted at under-13s, the boys' ages ranged from seven to eleven.

When coaching starts, the boys are divided up into four groups. One group is made up of the National Under-10 players. These boys were selected as the top players for their age group during pre-season trials and are being groomed with the aim of eventually joining the National Under-13s. The other boys, who are evenly divided into three teams, make up the larger player selection pool and are viewed as cricketers who possess potential. Each group is assigned one or two coaches. This is done on a weekly rotational basis. At the start of training, the coaches decide which section of the ground they want to use. The ground is divided up into five areas and each group is allocated a space. The groups usually stay in one area for the duration of their session but they take turns in the nets.



[Figure 7.2] Division of the Kallang ground into practice areas (not to scale)

A typical training session consists of three parts. Practices begin with a warm-up which can be a run round the circumference of the field or playing a modified game of rounders, followed by a series of stretches. The second part of the training consists of drills aimed at honing the players' skills. This is done through a variety of fielding, bowling and batting exercises. The last and most anticipated component is the short matches they play. In their respective groups, the boys pit their skills against one another. Most of them put their heart and soul into the game, attempting to make as many runs as possible, diving for every ball (as evidenced by their muddy clothing at the end of trainings), and bowling as fast and accurately as they possibly can. The boys' love for the sport is evident in their serious and enthusiastic participation in every aspect of their cricket training.

Whilst all the boys who play at the SCA enjoy cricket, I noted that there are subtle differences between the boys who play on Saturday and the ones who play on Sunday. As a whole, the boys who play on Saturday are more disciplined and structured in their playing form and mannerisms. Even when playing unsupervised on the grounds (i.e. before training, during water breaks, and after training), they organise themselves to do practice drills rather than playing games. A contributing factor could be that these boys have been playing at the SCA for longer and thus have had the formal structure instilled in them. The boys who play on Sunday on the other hand, demonstrate more of a raw passion and love for the game. The Sunday cricketers are more concerned with having fun and all they care about is playing the game and in doing so, emulate their cricket heroes. I noted this phenomenon in my fieldnotes when I participated in one such Sunday training.

The one and only coach, Sudhir, told me that the boys who play on Sunday have very big egos. They all think that they play very well and only ever want to play games and not do drills. He says that if he had his way, he would tell them all how bad they are to straighten them out... As true as it may be, if Sudhir were to do that, they may be put off the game for life. As Mr Subra [the administrator of the SCA] had told me, at this tender age, it's largely about having fun. If the boys don't have fun, they will not enjoy themselves. So he reckons that it is best to let them think that they are great cricketers. It was clear to me how the boys imagined themselves because throughout the morning, I could hear the little ones around me saying that they were going to hit the ball like Sachin Tendulkar and other famous players. Never mind that many a time, they actually missed the balls. They just carried on as if they were great cricketers. When it came to playing matches, these boys took them very seriously. Just like in real games, they demanded to have an umpire. And when they thought that he had made a bad call, they challenged and consequently 'fired' him. The boys yelled and shouted excitedly throughout the game. In one incident, when a boy took a wicket, his fellow team member yelled out "Come and give me a hug!" Very much in the fashion seen in international matches, the team gathered for a group embrace. Undoubtedly, the boys are very passionate about cricket and are driven by it. Talking to a few parents this morning, they mentioned how getting their sons up in the morning for school was a struggle but come Sunday mornings, they get up on time and are rearing to go.

For these cricket playing boys, their initiation into the sport started with a passion which was ignited by their fathers. This is demonstrated in the young Sunday cricketers. The setting of the SCA provides them an outlet to play the sport in a supportive environment. This in turn further fuels their interest in the sport. Out of this, the goal of the SCA is to gradually teach them the correct skills and impart knowledge, which has the effect of taming their raw drive, in order to create good cricket players. The boys are moulded and this is reflected in the Saturday cricketers.



[Figure 7.3] Boys doing a batting drill (source: author)

While making sure that the boys conform is not the primary goal, in order for one to rise up the player hierarchy, and to be included in any of the National squads, the boys have to improve their playing and this is done by following instructions. Thus, the cricket training ground is not just about the boys having fun, as compared to the informal playing arena. This increasingly disciplined approach to cricket is a reflection of the Singaporean approach to sport in general, and is uncharacteristic of most of the childhood experiences of fathers and foreign to mothers. However, parents have assumed formal training as an intrinsic part of their children's cricketing experience and their family's lives, valuing it for its multitude of benefits.

For the boys, when I asked them why they played cricket, all of them replied that it was simply because they liked the game. Posing the same question to the parents with regards to their children's interest in the sport, after the initial naturalising discourse,

parents detailed the benefits they saw in their sons' participation. I noted that there are two distinct types of benefits. The ones listed by the fathers were mostly generic character building traits like acquiring leadership skills, co-operation through learning to be a team player, and improvement of fitness and coordination. The following quotes exemplify the views of a number of fathers on the benefits of their sons' cricket playing.

Saurav: I think for the individual, it is very good for development because it is a team sport... taking the initiative and all that. So it has helped me in the past and I see him developing that skill of being able to drive things... I think the major thing is development as a better person.

Sandeep: The main thing is concentration. Because if you are a batsman, you do concentrate on the ball all the time. It depends on what you are good at. If you are fielding, you do concentrate on the ball. And if you are bowling, you do concentrate on bowling on the wicket. So concentration, athleticism, some coordination skills.

Nikhil: It has helped him in a couple of ways. Being a team player. It also brings about some sort of aggression, some sort of compromise. Basically trying to keep the team together. It is a team achievement. Encouraging the team members. Putting in the extra effort. Leading by example. They have to come up and set up more team spirit for the team. Like yesterday [Stumped '05] as an example, probably for Kanak it was the first time, in a decisive match. Their team had eight players but only needed six to play. They had played four matches already. His coach asked him to stay out to let the other players have a chance. For a moment, it was a big blow for him to stay outside of the line but that may have made him a little stronger by allowing the other team members who didn't get a change to play, to now have a chance to play.

These benefits can not only be identified with cricket but any other team sport. The other interesting point to be noted is that these traits listed are also characteristics that the fathers themselves acknowledge that they accumulated through their own childhood cricketing experiences. This effectively blurred the distinction between

fathers' informal play and their sons' formal play, making their sons' experiences, just cricket.

Unlike the fathers, mothers on the other hand, acknowledged the more practical and tangible benefits that are specific to their sons' participation in formal cricket training. The rewards they cited include time management skills, discipline, and the point that saw the most elaboration – cricket as educational capital. Such themes were voiced by all the mothers but none more eloquently than Indrakshi.

Indrakshi: One thing he's learned, which I really appreciate is that he doesn't waste time. He's disciplined. He's been getting up at 6.30 on Saturdays for like five years now. Just to get to the cricket grounds at eight o'clock on Saturdays. And on school days, Tuesdays and Thursdays, he also has to go [to the SCA for training]. After school, he will rest for a while; have his lunch, [and] leaves for cricket after that. It requires tremendous discipline at that age. He has worked hard. There's no doubt about it. But he is still learning the time management process. Some times he finds it difficult. He has no time to waste. Even if he does have time, his father says, do some exercises to build up the shoulder muscles. He has dumbbells at home to build up his arms. Whatever time he gets, he reads or does exercise instead of hanging around. If you want to become someone in cricket, you've gotta work hard. He knows that. [In terms of his schooling] definitely we want him to go to a good secondary school and he had the talent for this game so we thought why not make use of it, in getting him into a school that he wants to go to. But we also had another consideration and that was that the school should have a good cricketing team. We want him to continue cricket, definitely. So we were looking at schools which have cricket as an active CCA. And RI and ACS definitely have them...

The difference between the benefits described by the fathers and mothers serves to reinforce the divisive line of the roles and responsibilities of the parents. As the ideological spearheads of cricket, the fathers perceive the idealised benefits of their sons' participation. For the mothers who see to the practicalities of the sport and act as

the primary facilitators of their children's education, drawing on their sons' gift for the sport as educational capital and linking this to accessing elite education is convenient. The ultimate reward for both parents is the success their son demonstrates in and through the cricket field; that they make the cut for the National squads and gain entry into an elite school because of the recognition of their cricket talent and experience. This is important because what the boys demonstrate (to themselves and others) by drawing on the 'natural' Indian capital is its positive relevance in the new situation and this effectively encourages them to play out and reinforces their authentic Indian identity.

Cricket, though the widely accepted public culture of the Indian subcontinent, in terms of experiencing it first hand (playing, spectatorship and topic of discussion), is a distinctly male domain. This is exemplified by the application of the 'in the blood' discourse by the boys themselves and of the boys by their parents. The use of cricket in the project of inculcating Indianness is in fact gendered in that while cricket is seen to be inherent in boys, it is not the case for girls who attempt to get it into their blood by playing the sport. Therefore, girls who do play cricket, reproduce and (re)construct a distinct female Indian identity.

Girls' cricket

The rationale behind the boys' uptake of cricket was repeatedly put down to their inborn connection. This too was the case for some of the girls. However, upon further probing, this explanation was never sustained. For all the girls I interviewed and played with, I found that they each had reasons they attributed to their participation in the game. This explains why Indian girls approach cricket differently to their male counterparts. To illuminate the varying reasons, I will give the short accounts of four girls. They are Priyanka Kapoor, Neha Pillai, Mohini Patel, and Hema Laal.

Priyanka Kapoor

At the age of five and a half, Priyanka was the youngest female cricketer that I encountered. She is the youngest member of a 'cricketing family'. She had started

playing six months prior to me meeting her. Priyanka takes after whatever her elder brother, Arjun, does. Because he plays cricket, so does she. Priyanka trains along side her brother in his school's cricket team. She is the only female cricketer. It is likewise with golf. Despite their age and gender difference, their parents say that they get along fairly well and are one another's cricket playing companions at home.

The parents, Rupali and Mohan, are extremely supportive of their daughter's venture into the cricketing arena. In the face of the dismal prospect of girls' cricket, Rupali expressed the desire to generate new avenues which will enable Priyanka to take the sport further, should her daughter wish to do so. Like she has done for Arjun, Rupali has innovative plans in mind to create such opportunities.

Rupali: My intention is that if she still wants to pursue cricket, I will talk with the Singapore Cricket Association and whenever Planet Primary team is going [to play a match] and she is capable of playing for the team, they will have to take her.

Yan: Like a mixed team.

Rupali: Mixed team because there is no opportunity to have an only girls' team.

When I asked why it was that there was a lack of opportunity for girls in cricket, Mohan gave me three reasons.

Mohan: Primarily and historically, it has been very male centred.

Yan: But for Indians, the female Indian National Cricket Squad perform quite well on the world circuit.

Mohan: They do, but the visibility and the popularity is still no where compared to men's cricket. The *natural game* [emphasis added] is that men's cricket game, not the women's cricket game.

Yan: Would Indian parents be supportive of their female children to play cricket?

Rupali: Yah, obviously.

Mohan: I think they will be supportive but if you ask them, they will say "Why do you play cricket? Why don't you play tennis?"

The reasons given for the lack of girls playing were that cricket is the ‘natural’ male game, resulting in a lack of visibility of female players, and the lack of support from parents. The Kapoors, especially Rupali, stand out in their proactive support of their children’s endeavours, particularly pertaining to cricket. Their support is a large part why Priyanka plays cricket passionately. And I think that the major reason for her taking up the sport is because cricket is so central to the life of her family and she wants to be a part of it, to be able to connect with her brother as well as her father through their activity of choice. Priyanka’s case demonstrates the power of the influence of her family’s interest in shaping her as an individual. For the next girl, Neha, the impact of the creation of a cricket loving environment in her home by family and friends stemming from one event, was the catalyst for her invested pursuit in the game.

Neha Pillai

I got to know Neha, aged fourteen, through the girls’ training program at the SCA where she is a regular participant. Her family moved to Singapore when she was eleven years old. Prior to the 2003 Cricket World Cup, Neha showed no interest in the sport. However, during the tournament, family friends gathered in their apartment to watch the competitions, and this resulted in Neha getting hooked onto cricket and she started to play cricket daily. Neha’s initial memories of cricket relate primarily to the social atmosphere generated and the extended family that was created around the World Cup. It was not so much her father’s interest in the sport that fuelled her passion because he is not as big a fan as others like Mohan. This may explain why her cricket playing frequency has since dwindled to once a week at the SCA with which she is content because her fellow players form a kind of extended kin network, an Indian sisterhood, that was established through the commonality of an interest in cricket. This idea of making friends and meeting other Indians is prevalent amongst the girls, as depicted in Mohini’s account.

Mohini Patel

Yan: What do you think cricket does for you?

Mohini: Like knowing the game brings me closer to India because it is an Indian game. When you play, you also make more friends. Even though the CCA has disbanded, we still remain good friends.

As a seventeen year old, Mohini articulates clearly her reasons for participation in school cricket. Although she prefaces that the sport brings her closer to India, it is really the use of the site to develop friendships that is of greater interest to her. Specifically, this refers to her making of Indian friends because Indians are the ones who are attracted to playing cricket in the first place. Thus, in saying that the game brings her closer to India, it is true in a very literal sense because the sport facilitates the gathering and interaction of Indian girls.

Growing up in a family where her father and younger brother are keen cricketers, Mohini was exposed to the sport and a level of knowledge and degree of interest was instilled in her over time. It can be said that her family provided her with the cricket capital that enabled her to interact with other Indians on the cricket field. She joined her school girls' CCA cricket team which was formed by a group of girls who Mohini's mother, described as "girls of Indian origins, who have a love of cricket because of their homes and families". However, the team did not last long because of the dissatisfaction they felt with their coach and the inconvenience they faced with having to make the long commute to and from the SCA. Because the girls were not motivated by a strong passion for cricket, their interest in participating in the sport was not sustained. The endeavour however, was not a complete waste of time because the underlying goal of making friends with other Indians was achieved. It is also these friends who will determine whether or not she joins the SCA's Saturday girls' training program, as her parents suggested. Guidance and encouragement from Mohini's parents with relation to her involvement in cricket were evident during our conversations. But they were very subtle. This was unlike Hema's case where her participation in formal training is driven by her mother.

Hema Laal

Fifteen year old Hema is by far, the most reluctant participant I met at the SCA on Saturdays. During practice, she would put in the least effort possible and was always in a hurry to leave once training was over. I asked her why she played cricket and her reply was, “Because my mother told me to”. Her mother’s rationale for persuading Hema to take part in formal cricket training is that it would help her to gain discretionary admission into the school of her choice; namely Victoria Junior College (VJC). Like the elite boys’ institutions, RI and ACS (I), VJC is a top school that also has an excellent cricket team. Hema told me that she in fact hates cricket and longed for the day when she gets into VJC, after which, she does not have to touch a cricket bat or ball ever again. Her cricketing days are limited as the reason for her participation is the use of cricket as a means to an end. Hema’s case was unique amongst the girls. Although she clearly possessed a sense of disdain for the sport, she did manage to form friendships with a number of players.



[Figure 7.4] Hema batting during a match (source: author)

For girls, the central theme that runs through all their accounts is the social relations around cricket. This is clear in Priyanka’s case where she takes part because it is an activity that is valued by her father and brother. For Neha, she started out because of the atmosphere that she saw was created around the sport by her family and friends, and wanted to be a component of it. Wherein, she developed friendships that helped maintain her regular participation in trainings through her primary role as coordinator of the girls, calling them individually to encourage them to show up on Saturdays. In

Mohini's case, friendships with Indian girls were also the result of her short stint in the cricket team, with whom she may consider furthering her cricketing experience. And lastly, for Neha, girls with whom she can banter and have the odd giggle are what make her attendance at training, out of obedience to her mother's instruction, tolerable. Because the foundation on which girls' play cricket differs hugely from the boys, the result is dissimilar trainings sessions at the SCA despite them taking place in the same location, at the same time, under similar guidelines and instruction.

The girls and structured cricket

From the extensive time I spent training and talking with the girls, I discovered that although their cricket training set-up is similar to the boys, due to the dynamics within the group and varied motivations for playing, their cricket was worlds apart from the boys. To give an idea of a typical girls' coaching session, I have drawn out notes from my fieldwork and put together the following composite account.

Most of the girls arrived late as usual today. As the girls gathered, Sonia, Apala, and Shanti sat around a table discussing what had happened at school the week prior. When a good number of girls had gathered, Sonia (the unofficial leader of the group) suggested that we jog round the field to warm up. The girls' drawn out attempt at making a decision was cut short by Dharma calling us out to the field to commence the training. He instructed us to run a lap round the field. This warm-up left a few girls puffed.

We had a record number of participants today. There were twelve in total. The fewest we have had is seven. There were two new players, Nisha (aged twelve) and Anita (a mother) and two other players whom I had never met, Yashila and Ruth (Australian).

Dharma started the session by saying that it was good to have so many participants and that we should keep up the attendance so that a proper competitive team can be formed. And do to so, that the girls should rope in even more friends. The second thing he emphasized was the need for the girls to take training more seriously. He wanted to see more energy. He did a demonstration of how one girl was running during the warm-up with her arms flopping by her side. This was the first time he had addressed the lack of enthusiasm amongst the girls directly.



[Figure 7.5] Girls' training (source: author)

Next, we did a catching exercise. For this, we were divided into two teams. The aim of the activity was to take as many catches as possible because the number of misses determined the number of push-ups the whole team had to do. After completing the second set of push-ups, Pratibha (a mother) said to me “Yan! You’re disgusting!” because I managed to complete the task without having to exert myself much. She, along with the rest of the girls except Nisha, struggled through the exercise.

The catching exercise was followed by a like variation which was performed without too much difficulty. After that, Dharma gave us a lecture on how important it is to be able to throw a straight ball over a good distance (i.e. from the boundary to the crease). Sonia was sent a distance away from us to be the catcher of the balls. I and Pratibha were the first up to attempt the long distance throws. Failing miserably, Dharma scrapped the exercise. He then proceeded to do a demonstration of how throws should be made, and paired us up to throw over a shorter distance. I partnered up with Nisha, who has a very strong throwing arm. Continuing on with the same partner, the last practice drill we did involved getting on one knee and throwing the ball solely using our wrist, a much desired skill that alone can send a ball a fair distance (or so I was told).

Because we had more people today, we spent more time playing a game. As usual, Dharma appointed Neha and Sonia as team captains. And as expected, they both protested. This time, instead of reasoning with them, Dharma did something different. He appointed a couple of quiet girls, Hema and Dayiti, captains instead. This was the first instance I had ever seen Hema so vocal. She lamented about how she could not

bat or bowl to save her life, let alone captain a team. In her final bid to refute the role, she pointed at me and said “Why don’t you make her captain?” To which Dharma replied that he was afraid of me because I am older than him. She relented and the match commenced. I was left puzzled as to how I got involved in the conversation.



[Figure 7.6] Girls’ match (source: author)

I was on Dayiti’s team along with Nisha, Ruth, Anita and Yashila. We opted to bowl first. Despite us taking a couple of early wickets (remarkably I took two), the opposition scored a good few runs. When we swapped over, we made few runs to start with until it was Nisha and Ruth’s turn to bat. Nisha wielded the bat and sent balls flying. I could see the frustration of the other team, especially on Sonia’s face. A couple of runs away from the target to beat, Sonia threw the game. I think she was embarrassed that her team that was made up of seasoned players was being beaten by a team made up largely of newbies, especially Nisha who had only started playing a couple months prior with some boys at school. Not much was said about the loss except Ruth who yelled out to the opposition “At least lose with some dignity!” as they walked away. All this transpired while Dharma had left to take a phone call so he was unaware of what had happened. When everyone had gathered under the pavilion, he wrapped-up the session by giving a couple of pointers. One was that we had to practice our bowling more because we were giving wides too often. When we play here, we are spoilt because we are given the opportunity to bowl again, but in proper cricket matches, we would probably end up giving away the game easily. The second thing he did was to educate us on the basic fielding positions. He illustrated them on the whiteboard. This was done in preparation for the game that he had arranged for us the following week against a school team. The girls were very excited because they had not played another side since the mid year tournament organised by

the SCA. After the girls disbanded, Dharma asked me whether I knew the name the girls had given their team for the competition. I said I did not. He told me that they call themselves 'No Balls'.

It took me a couple of Saturdays before I gained the trust of the girls and made contact. A few factors contributing to the barrier are, I am Chinese, all of them save one, are Indian; I am older than them and their coach; and I had a different objective from them for participating in the cricket training. I fell outside what Fine calls their 'idiocultures' (1987).

When the girls are on the field, enjoying the game was not necessarily be on their minds. Fine's (1987) study of boys in American Little League baseball showed that adult organised sport is a stage (1987: 16), space in which participants perform for an audience made up of parents, coaches, fellow players and peers. Sporting skills are paraded, players are sized up, categorized, and distinguished by their playing ability. In line with the concept that children possess agency, Fine argues that the "boys have the power, within constraints, to shape the world of their choosing" (1987: 2). One of the ways they do this is by organising themselves into small groups. Each of these groups possess and 'idioculture'. This is defined as follows.

"Idioculture consists of a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and that serve as the basis of further interaction. Members recognize that they share experiences, and these experiences can be referred to with the expectation they will be understood by other members, thus being used to construct a social reality for the participants" (1987: 125).

Fine lists jokes, nicknames and attitudes as examples of features of idioculture. This concept is useful for understanding the group dynamics of the girls.

Amongst the girls, I identified three distinct idiocultures – 'the players', 'obedient girls', and 'cricket girls'. The first group known as 'the players', is made up of girls who attend 'foreign system schools'⁵⁰ and they are in the majority. Girls in this group

⁵⁰ These institutions cater primarily to the educational needs of children of expatriates.

are competent cricketers. Some of them have been training at the SCA for up to four years. Sonia, whom I mentioned in my fieldnote excerpt, fits into this category. The length of time she has been training at the SCA may explain why she opted to throw the match instead of losing outright to newcomers. Another point to make about this group is that they use the SCA as a venue to socialise. This is done not only amongst the girls but it also evident through their interaction and conversations with the coaches (most of them are in their early twenties and single). For example, when I conducted my first observation at the SCA, I noted that there were a couple of Indian girls, school friends of 'the player' girls, who were dolled-up and they had caught the eye of the coaches. During an interview with Sumit, an active cricket player, coach and umpire, he confirmed my observation on the relations between certain girls and the coaches, relating an incident whereby he had bumped into a couple of coaches hanging out together socially with some of the girls from the squad outside of the SCA. I call these girls 'players' because they are fairly skilled players of the game but also players in the relationship field.

The second idioculture, known as the 'obedient girls', is made up of two girls who play cricket because their mothers influenced them to. These girls have the least enthusiasm about the sport and their lack of interest shows when they play. Hema and Dayiti belong to this category. As explained earlier, the reason for Hema's involvement is due to the desire to use cricket as educational capital. For Dayiti, there are a couple of reasons behind her mother's push for her participation. The first is that her younger brothers both train at the SCA and her inclusion makes it a family activity. The second is that her mother wanted her to do a physically challenging activity as a break from her preferred indoor pursuits like singing. Cricket just happened to be the 'natural' activity of choice. Both the girls did the bare minimum during training for the sake of being obedient to their mothers. For Dayiti however, she had to show more effort in order to please her mother when the latter, Pratibha, started playing with the girls.

The third idioculture, the 'cricket girls', comprises another two girls. The distinguishing characteristic of this group is that they take cricket very seriously. They are even more skilled than the girls from the first idioculture which can create friction between the two as demonstrated in the instance of how Nisha out-performed Sonia

on her first day, causing a break-down in the group. Another factor that differentiated Nisha and Prema from the rest is that both of them are similarly tomboyish, sporting short haircuts (contravening the Indian norm of women keeping their hair long) and upsetting their mothers to no end with their preoccupation with what their mothers saw was a boys' game. Nisha and Prema took absolutely no interest in conversations unrelated to cricket.

Throughout the training session, the girls tend to stick to their own idioculture. With the exception of the two girls who take cricket seriously, the conversation in the other groups revolve around topics like school, boys, and Indian media like Bollywood movies. The coach participates in these conversations but also makes a conscious effort to step out of the idiocultures, back into his official role. In the latter capacity, he reprimands the girls, tells them to put more effort into their practices, and encourages them to get more girls to join the cricket training to facilitate the formation of a national women's cricket team. I believe that the likelihood and success of this is dependent upon the recruitment of 'cricket girls' because they are more serious than the rest about cricket.

As demonstrated in the second half of the chapter, the majority of the girls approach cricket differently from boys. The reason for this lies in their underlying motivation behind participation in the sport. Most, who belong to the first two idiocultures, 'the players' and 'obedient girls', are far from living out cricket-centred lives. Rather, their involvement in the sport pertains to the relationships that are engaged in the process and emerge as a result, whether it is with friends, family, or members of the opposite gender. Thus, for them, cricket functions as a social space in which Indians can meet and interact, reinforcing one another's Indian identity. Unlike the aforementioned girls, the 'cricket girls' are more like the boys in terms of their persona and attitude toward the game and training. Prema and Nisha challenge the conventional view that cricket is a male domain because they too take the sport just as seriously and thus, like the boys, possess cricket 'in their blood'. But for the majority of the girls, I found that they were not as passionate about the sport as these two. Thus, although cricket can serve as a domain in which the traditional roles of females can be challenged, by and large, reproduction of Indian female identity is the result of the lukewarm involvement of the girls whereby their participation in cricket is far from natural.

Conclusion: negotiating Indianness

The nurturing and inculcation of Indian identity in NRI children is a lived and ongoing process. As an Indian transnational practice, cricket, a habitual part of the lives of NRI families, plays a big part in imparting certain values and characteristics, a huge one being gendered Indianness. This is because cricket is perceived as a predominantly male sport as reflected in the reinforcement of the naturalising discourse by fathers (about themselves and their sons) and by the way that when some females use it, it is not sustained and falls aside to reveal their other rationale for taking part in the sport (e.g. developing social relationships). In part, because the girls were mostly in their teens, they were able to articulate their own varied reasons for playing and were capable of acting out of line against the will of their parents, which is a reflection of their individual agency. Though there is room for girls to challenge their parents, the peer support networks developed through cricket actually acts to reinforce their parents' habitus. In the sense that though the girls' involvement in cricket is largely peripheral, it is still sufficient for the retention of their Indianness. When they themselves eventually become mothers, they only need to continue with the nourishing process as 'cricket mothers', shoulder the responsibility of maintaining tradition. Hence, like their mothers, the girls approach cricket in a practical, calculated fashion. Thus, the form of Indianness inculcated in the girls was specific to females. The boys on the other hand, who were younger and generally unaware of their parents' intentions, lived out less complicated, single-minded naturally cricket-focused lives.

Returning to the idea that I introduced in the beginning of the chapter; children are central to migration because they are active agents. In the process of reproducing and reconstructing diasporic Indian identity through cricket, the interaction of the parents and children is pivotal because each not only constructs their own lives in relation to the sport, their involvement also impacts upon the lives around them and thus the societies they live in. The children's participation in cricket pragmatically helps their parents assimilate (e.g. facilitating their mothers' interactions with people outside the home). But more importantly, it helps the parents and in turn the children, maintain their connection with India through the playing out of an innate Indian activity, thereby reproducing their Indianness.

Conclusion

The (re)production of Indian identity in the Singaporean context by Non-Resident Indian elite families is predominantly done through their involvement in cricket. Placing emphasis on ‘family’ differentiates my research from the many studies done on the use of sport to reinforce national identities in the migrant context (e.g. Werbner 1996, Madan 2000, Sanadjian 2002). My focus on family was essential because NRIs migrate to Singapore as nuclear units. This study combines four major areas – family, national identity, sport and migration. In my review of literature, I found that these areas have not been accounted for in a single study. Madan (2000) for example, looks at the Indian diaspora and cricket but does not explore family. Kurotani (2005) looks at corporate transnational Japanese but focuses solely on what the mothers do. Ong’s (2002) study of Chinese transnationals looks at families as a whole but not on specific roles of each individual within the household. What I have done in my study is combine all these factors with a focus on families. Going one step further, I explored each individual’s involvement in the sport as a means of explaining how these families as a whole did cricket. I found this to be important because my findings revealed varied and unique roles adopted by each family member. All of this contribute to the project of (re)producing Indianness by living out the idea that cricket is ‘in the blood’.

The ubiquitous South Asian procreative ‘seed and earth’ metaphor fittingly reflects how the idea of cricket as being ‘natural’ to Indians is perpetuated by NRI parents. The fathers sow the seeds of interest through their ‘cricket stories’, while the mothers are the ground in which the seeds are nurtured through their support. And the fruition of the parents’ combined labour is seen in their children.

Although many, if not all my informants, claimed that cricket is ‘natural’ to all Indians, my time spent with these families highlighted to me just how much effort goes into producing Indian identities. In addition, further probing revealed that the

sport was thought of as innate to males, not females. The attitudes that the NRI children adopt toward cricket vary. There is a clear distinction between cricket participation of the boys and girls. Thus, whilst cricket serves to (re)produce Indianness, it is very much a gendered Indian identity.

The identity of NRI children is complex because it encompasses multiplicity that results from transnational movement and increased transcultural fluidity. Drawing on Bourdieu's enabling sense of habitus, individuals have the ability to shape their notions of identity by the choices they make, albeit within the constraint imposed largely by their parents. Although they adopt largely their father's passion for cricket, naturalising the sport as Indian, children include the sport as part of their hybridised Indian identities. Similarly, in the case of the second generation Indians in Pittsburgh (Rayaprol 2001), the children adopted hybrid identities. There were three approaches to Indian traditions. One was taking after certain practices full heartedly (i.e. eating and cooking Indian food). Another was an outright refusal to practice things like temple visits which usually stopped when they reached their teens. Yet another more prevalent way was a modification of Indian practices to fit their social situation (i.e. desi music, wearing Indian clothing on special occasions). In my case, I think that it is likely that children will probably continue their involvement in cricket but this could change with their circumstance (i.e. reduced participation for both girls and boys due to an increased emphasis on school work). Evidence of change in how girls carry out cricket has occurred. Much to my surprise, from the bleak prospect I saw with regards to the formation of a girls' team, they have managed to create a women's National side (still made up largely of NRIs). This gives cricket-loving girls like the Kapoor's young daughter Priyanka a brighter prospect of furthering her interest in the sport.

Sport is a key element of social life (Palmer 2002: 253). It is often associated with nationalist sentiments (i.e. New Zealand and rugby, Brazil and soccer, etc.). This is also the case with Indians and cricket. With the NRIs, I found an additional take on their heavy involvement in the sport – cricket as capital. These privileged Indian parents use the sport that bears an elitist status in Singapore, as a means to gain and instil the 'right' types of capital in their children in the hope of bettering their social and class status. Lareau (2003) calls this type of parenting 'concerted cultivation'.

Understood in a Bourdiean framework, cricket serves as a range of capitals. Firstly, consumption of the sport is a manifestation of Indian cultural capital and in relation to extended family and connections in India. Secondly, cricket serves as a means to accessing educational capital for the NRI children. Thirdly, cricket acts as a form of social capital, generating relationships within the family, as well as outside of the home, mostly with fellow NRIs. And lastly, cricket is a symbolic capital for distinguishing Indians because it reinforces and (re)produces their reputation and image as authentic Indians. In this context it furthermore provides gains in distinction through the creation of exclusiveness in the social space of cricket in Singapore.

The cricket field is a crucial site for the NRI. Transnational movement, which has been linked with an increased fragmentation of identity acts to heighten reflection and reflexivity on one's identity. Thus, migration involves constant reinvention and redefinition of the self. This is a process that is complex and potentially full of contradictions. One way of responding to this situation involves anchoring identity in the past in order to accomplish cultural continuity yet simultaneously remain modern and capable of change. NRIs use cricket to achieve this because the sport is representative of India. Hence, their investment in it reproduces that Indianness in their daily lives.

The kind of Indianness that NRIs produce through cricket in Singapore is specific to their location and social situation. Unlike other forms of doing diaspora (i.e. religion, food, language), and largely attributed to the 'old' diaspora (Mishra 1996 in Diethrich 1999: 36), cricket, a trait of the 'border' (Mishra 1996 in Diethrich 1999: 36), 'consumerist' driven diaspora (Robertson 1992 in Rayaprol 2001: 159) differs and works for the elite NRI families in Singapore because it is simultaneously inclusive and exclusive. On the one hand, cricket potentially unites Indians across nations regardless of social, cultural, religious, and language differences. On the other, in Singapore, cricket serves to distinguish the NRIs as elite 'authentic' Indians. Effectively, what is created is a new brand of Indian ethnicity/identity that is adaptable to changes according to the circumstances. This cricket-centred Indianness is reflective of the naturalising discourse, exemplified by the comment "Cricket is in the blood", because this type of Indian identity is fluid (capable of change) yet arguably felt permanent. This is why cricket is the way the upwardly mobile,

diasporic NRI (re)produce Indianness in Singapore since for them, “cricket is itself a metaphor for life” (Guha and Vaidyanathan 1994: xii).

Appendix A

(Source - Anand: 2002)

- **1978 team that played the West Indies in the Bombay test**

PLAYER	CASTE
SM Gavaskar	Brahman ⁵¹
CPS Chauhan	'Upper' caste
M Amarnath	'Upper' caste
GR Viswanath	Brahman
DB Vengsarkar	Brahman
SMH Kirmani	Muslim
N Kapil Dev	Jat
KD Ghavri	'Upper' caste
S Venkataraghavan	Brahman
BS Bedi	Sikh
BS Chandrasekhar	Brahman

- **1982 team that played England at Lord's**

PLAYER	CASTE
SM Gavaskar	Brahman
GAHM Parkar	'Upper' caste
DB Vengsarkar	Brahman
GR Viswanath	Brahman
Yashpal Sharma	Brahman
O Malhotra	'Upper' caste
N Kapil Dev	Jat
RJ Shastri	Brahman
SMH Kirmani	Muslim
S Madan Lal	Brahman
DR Doshi	Brahman

- **1996 Indian team that played England in the Birmingham test**

PLAYER	CASTE
V Rathour	'Upper' caste
A Jadeja	'Upper' caste
SV Manjrekar	Brahman
SR Tendulkar	Brahman
M Azharuddin	Muslim, captain
NR Mondia	'Upper' caste
SB Joshi	Brahman
A Kumble	Brahman
J Srinath	Brahman
PL Mhambrey	'Upper' caste
BKV Prasad	Brahman

⁵¹ Brahmins constitute about three percent of the Indian population but the average number of Brahmins in each team was six.

Appendix B

(Source - Singapore Sports Council – Mgmt Services Division (Research) (November 2001) *National Sports Participation Survey 2001: Research Findings*)

- Figures showing the participation by Singaporeans in the twenty most popular sporting activities

1	Jogging	13.33%
2	Swimming	10.15%
3	Walking	6.96%
4	Soccer	4.41%
5	Badminton	3.95%
6	Cycling	3.12%
7	Gym workout	2.89%
8	Basketball	2.56%
9	Golf	1.51%
10	Tennis	1.44%
11	Athletics	1.02%
12	Dancing (all forms)	0.97%
13	Ten pin bowling	0.91%
14	Callisthenics	0.86%
15	Qigong ⁵²	0.82%
16	Rhythmic exercises	0.68%
17	Taiji Quan ⁵³	0.62%
18	Table tennis	0.59%
19	Netball	0.51%
20	Billiards/snooker/pool	0.47%

⁵² Qigong is a type of ancient Chinese system of postures, exercises, breathing techniques, and meditations to improve one's chi/qi (energy field).

⁵³ Commonly known as Tai Chi, this is an internal Chinese martial art. It is often promoted and practice as a martial arts therapy for the purposes of health and longevity. Tai Chi is considered a soft style martial art, an art applied with as complete a relaxation or 'softness' in the musculature as possible, as opposed to the tension in the muscles seen in hard martial art styles like karate, tae kwon do, etc.

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